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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Religion is realization—Intellect cannot reach the Self—The Nasadiya Sukta of the *Rig Veda*.
(Place : Belur Monastery. Time : 7th July 1928).

Swami Shivananda was seated in his room, talking with a monk of the Order. Several Sadhus and Brahmacharis were also present. In the course of conversation the monk said : ‘ Emotion is all in all in spiritual life. Reason shows merely a small portion of the way. Swami Turiyananda used to say that emotion draws one to spiritual pursuit, that intellect helps only a little. One cannot comprehend religion through reasoning and intellect alone.’

Swami : ‘ Religion is, as Swamiji said, a matter of realization and experience. Before realization the intellect rules. This the Master explained in his simple way, “ The vessel makes a gurgling sound when being filled with water, but once full, it is all quiet.” What an apt illustration ! Even his simplest utterances had such a deep meaning ! The Upanishads also say : “ This Self is not to be realized by scholarship, reasoning, or an extensive study of the scriptures.” It is too

true. How can man understand the Self by his limited intellect ? It is impossible.’

‘ The Master used to sing : “ Who knows what the Mother is ? Even the six systems of philosophy have not been able to fathom her.” ’

Saying this, Mahapurushji sang the entire song with great fervour. He repeated one line again and again : ‘ Only Mahakala (the Absolute) and no one else knows all about the Mother.’ After a while, like one aroused from sleep, the Swami said : ‘ How can man understand the Absolute through the intellect ? Comprehension is possible only if the Mother is gracious enough to lift the veil. In the Nasadiya Sukta of the *Rig Veda* there is a beautiful description of the Absolute in its undifferentiated state.’ With these words Mahapurushji started chanting the Nasadiya Sukta :

Nor aught nor nought existed ; yon bright sky
Was not, nor heaven’s broad roof outstretched above.

What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed?
 Was it the water's fathomless abyss?
 'Ah, how profound it is! There on that table
 you will find a copy of this hymn, which I
 often read. It describes the state of deep
 meditation. Would you please read the rest
 of it?'

The monk read the hymn, and Swami Shivananda joined in the reading.

There was not death—yet was there naught immortal,
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;
 The only One breathed breathless by Itself,
 Other than It there nothing since has been.
 Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
 In gloom profound—an ocean without light—
 The germ that still lay covered in the husk
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
 Then first came love upon it, the new spring
 Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,
 Pondering, this bond between created things
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth
 Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?
 Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—
 Nature below, and power and will above—
 Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here,
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
 He from whom all this great creation came,
 Whether His will created or was mute,
 The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
 He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.

(Max Muller's translation)

* * *

Meditation and prayer essential in order to maintain the right spirit in humanitarian activities.
 (Place: Belur Monastery. Time: 7 December 1928)

At half past five in the evening Swami Shivananda was seated in the eastern verandah of the main building of the Belur Monastery. It was winter and the Swami had a light-weight flannel jacket on. Because of high blood-pressure he could not stand heavy clothes. At night he used a light-weight bed-cover.

Some young devotees, all of them teachers in a school, had arrived. After saluting the Swami, they took seats. The Swami inquired about their health and asked several questions concerning their school. How was instruction carried on? Were there arrangements for sports and games? For an interval he sat silent, seeming to be in an indrawn mood. Sometimes he gazed at the river

The hymn filled everyone's heart with profound feeling. A Bengali translation of it was then read, as requested by the Swami, after which he said: 'You see herein a description of some of the loftiest states of realization that are reached by Yogis in the course of deep meditation. A level of consciousness, beyond the reach of ordinary speech and mind, is mentioned here. Swamiji was fond of the Nasadiya Sukta and would chant it so rhythmically, in the right Vedic metre that one would feel as if a Vedic seer were repeating his own spiritual experience.

Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled

In gloom profound—an ocean without light—

Swamiji would repeat this portion of the hymn and say that nowhere in any language would you come across such poetic beauty. In one of his writings he brought out this idea nicely.'

Monk: 'Yes, Maharaj. In *Veera-vani* (a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's poems) there is the line: "At first in darkness hidden darkness lay, . . ."'

Swami: 'Yes, yes, how well expressed! In this poem is a description of the involution of the cosmos. Everything emerged gradually from that unmanifest state.'

Ganges and sometimes his eyes were half closed in meditation. Then he said softly, 'Well, do you practise meditation for a while every day?'

A devotee: 'Yes, I do.'

Swami: 'At what time?'

Devotee: 'In the afternoon following school work I take a little rest and then go to the shrine room and meditate. When there is not much to do in the morning I meditate then also. In the event I cannot make time for meditation in the morning, I at least salute the Lord, before going to school.'

Swami: 'Salute the Lord, of course—but that is not enough. You should also try to meditate a little. Night is the ideal time for meditation. When you meditate, though

for a short time, try to detach yourself completely from your work. Shaking off all worries and withdrawing yourself from everything, seek to be established in your own Self. You should practise this at least once a day, even if only for a short while. Naturally you have your duties and responsibilities in the world, your pains and pleasures there—but all these are transient. This world is unreal—there can be nothing more certain than that.

‘Though the work you are carrying on is no doubt good, for a while you will have to abstract your mind from even this and offer it at the lotus feet of the Lord, at the same time being absorbed in the thought of Him, who is the Supreme Father, the embodiment of Truth and Goodness. The Lord will then occupy your whole heart and there will be no thought of this world, no thought even of your own self. Pray to God thus: “O Lord, give me faith and devotion, knowledge and discrimination. See that I do not get entangled in the snares of the world-bewitching Maya.” When you pray, pray with all

your heart and soul. When you meditate, try to be one with God, to have the consciousness of unity and identity. One should, by all means, practise like this.

‘My children, I repeat: At the end of the day, even if for a short while, lay aside everything and commune with God. In the beginning you may have some difficulty in practising meditation in this way, but there is no reason to stop trying. Pray to Him, and He will give you peace. Out of His compassion He will strengthen your heart and make you one with Him. With the practice of meditation peace of mind will grow, and then alone will you be in a position to undertake humanitarian activities in the right spirit. Know for certain that this world and all living beings are His. He is the creator, you are His servants. You are blessed to the extent that He, in His grace, allows you to serve His creatures. Meditation on God will obliterate the ego, and He will then be all in all. Only when your mind reaches this state, will you be able to do genuine philanthropic work.’

* * * *

Formal vows of monasticism are easy—But knowledge and devotion are what count.
(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: 16 March 1929).

Only three days ago the worship connected with the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was performed with great solemnity and splendour at the Belur Monastery. On that occasion as many as seventeen Brahmacharis took the vow of monasticism and twenty-one young men were initiated into Brahmacharya. Swami Shivananda was present when the Homa (fire-ritual) took place. That morning he had a chill and developed a bad cold, but today he felt somewhat better.

Although physically he was not well, he was in a cheerful mood this morning, and many things were discussed. Suddenly addressing a newly initiated monk, he smilingly asked, ‘What name did you receive?’ Another monk gave the name of the newly initiated one, after which the Swami said in a solemn tone: ‘My child, the next thing

that happens in your life must come through the grace of God. It is easy to take the vow of monasticism, but a person cannot have supreme devotion and knowledge without God’s grace. The Lord is sure to grant the desire of one who sincerely yearns for devotion and knowledge. What shall it profit a man to have the ochre cloth if he does not possess knowledge and devotion? I know from my experience in Northern India—for instance in Benares, Hardwar, and other such places—that people come to the many monasteries and approach the abbots with presents of cloth, money, or similar things, pleading for the Viraja Homa (the fire-ritual performed in connection with monastic vows). They do not have even the education to pronounce the words “Viraja Homa” correctly. They say “Vija Homa.” The abbots go through the ceremony, and, lo and

behold, they become monks! From that time they subsist on alms and often start some business of their own. Though there are thousands of such Sanyasis, how many are there, my child, who crave genuine spiritual emancipation? If one would have as much longing for the realization of God as for the monastic vows, the fire-ritual, and so on, one would be immensely blessed. Most fortunate is he who renounces everything for the sake of God-realization! The number of such seekers is very small. They do not pay much attention to external dress and the like. My child, whether your dress is white or ochre, direct your attention to the essential

thing in life—the realization of God.'

On the previous day some of the newly initiated Sanyasis had gone out with their begging bowls for Madhukari. (This is the custom of begging a little food from many houses until a full meal is obtained, even as the bee collects honey from many flowers). In that regard, Mahapurushji remarked, 'It is not the general custom to practise Madhukari in this part of the country.'

After remaining silent for a while, the Swami said with great fervour: 'O Lord, all these seekers have come to Thy feet. Give them faith and devotion! Fill them!'

THE PROMISE OF RELIGION

BY THE EDITOR

He who knows the Brahman attains the highest. At one with the omniscient Brahman, the True and the Endless, he enjoys the fulfilment of all desires.—Taittiriya Upanishad. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.—Christ.

I

Man seeks happiness in this world. He seeks it in the economic wealth of the world—in land, forests, cattle, gold, houses, motor-cars, ships, aeroplanes, and all those wonderful inventions which are the result of a new arrangement of the molecules of the elements in which our earth including the atmosphere around it abounds. He seeks it in the company of fellow men and women—in the love of parents, wives, and children. He seeks it in the political world—in the subjugation of his enemies and in the enjoyment of extended power over large groups of men by making them obedient slaves to his whims. In earlier centuries the ideal of the common man in most countries was the king, and 'to be as happy as a king' is a common phrase in most of the cradle tales of the world. Story books for children as well as history books for grown-ups are full of the lives and adventures of the kings and queens, princes and princesses, and of their satellites, the warriors and landlords. The twentieth century has, however, been an unlucky one for princes and potentates. Sceptres and crowns have tumbled down in the dust in Europe, and the same process is

being accelerated in Asia with the ignominious surrender of Hirohito before the might of the American atom bomb. Kings as ideals of happiness have outlived their days. Growth of popular political institutions has destroyed the power and prestige of ruling princes and the older aristocracy. The new aristocracy of wealth, however, bids fair to take the place left vacant by the disappearing kings. Kings are no longer considered as ideals of the happiest life; rather they are looked down upon as blood-suckers and dissolute spendthrifts and as having no more right to their kingdoms than the robber to his ill-gotten gains. The new ideal of happiness in the eyes of the common man especially in capitalistic countries is represented by the young heir of the American multi-millionaire, who, at the bidding of his father, begins his apprenticeship at an early age in the factories of his father, and rises up rung by rung to the top of the business, finally marries a beautiful young heiress who is as wealthy as himself, starts on a honeymoon tour round the world by car, by ship, and by air, buys all the curios in all the lands he visits, and returns home to live happily ever after in his plastic palaces fitted

with radio and television sets, and other modern scientific gadgets. This is the modern form of the idea of the measure of human happiness. To describe it in the words of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*; 'Let there be a noble young man, who is well read, agile, firm, and strong, and let him be master of the earth with all its wealth at his feet; that is one measure of human bliss.' But the multi-millionaires scarcely number a few hundreds all over the world. In America there are only forty-three members in the 'Billion Dollar Club.' The rest of mankind have, therefore, to be satisfied with less than the full measure of human bliss. Nay, ninety-nine per cent of them have to be satisfied with an actual one-millionth part of the 'measure of human bliss.' Also there are some to whom life is a veritable hell, so to say. Yet how familiar is the spectacle in all countries of the increasing worship at the temple of mammon, even though the chances of the deity being gracious to ninety-nine per cent of the worshippers are practically nil? Starting with the elementary urge to fulfil the needs of food and clothing, the desire for possession and enjoyment grows on what it feeds. This is in keeping with the nature of the inner structure of man in general. His mind is ordinarily so constituted that it is engrossed with the objects of the world outside. As the *Katha Upanishad* says: 'The self-created One projected the senses outward; therefore man sees not the Self, but the outside world. But one wise man in a million, wishing to gain immortality, turns his eyes inward and sees the Self.'

II

But there are many men and women who have not yet felt the need for religion or the desire for immortality, or even a belief in its possibility for the human soul. They want to enjoy the world to the full. They want to explore the secrets of nature and harness these into the service of man. They desire to increase the material wealth of their country and the world, and want all people to live comfortably. Such a type of mind is exemplified by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In his

recent convocation address to the graduates of the Calcutta University, he said:

It seems to me that there has been hardly any time in recorded history when humanity has faced such enormous possibilities of change and transformation as it faces today. . . .

Have a new vision of a new India and Asia and a new world before you. I do not know how many of you see the full realization of that vision. . . . The immediate problems before India are feeding, housing, and clothing 400 million people. . . .

The housing, clothing and feeding of 400 million people must come through the approach of science, which was called the God-mother of the world. . . .

These are noble sentiments and will find an echo in every heart. The lust for greed and power of certain groups of men the world over has kept millions on the verge of starvation and misery and in virtual slavery. That there should be greater production of material wealth, and a more equitable distribution of it are now axioms which only die-hard capitalists will dispute. With the happily growing diminution of the separatism into classes and groups among men, with the increasing growth of the feeling of being in the same boat among the proletariat of the world, there has arisen a corresponding increase in the sentiment of common brotherhood. But in this fervent desire for the removal of economic, political and social difficulties, let us not forget that man lives not by bread alone. It is true that man must live before he can philosophize; but it is equally true that unless life is based on a proper philosophy, mankind cannot be saved by the eating of bread alone. For do we not see that it is the richest nations of the earth, made powerful by science that God-mother of the modern world, that are rushing at each other's throats? Is not the philosophy of the economic basis of the world that has been responsible for the awful waste of millions of lives, and untold material wealth? Is not this the same philosophy of life that threatens the world with another world war and the plunging of entire nations into greater starvation, famine, and misery? The neglecting of the spiritual ends and values of life is sure to bring in its wake inevitable disaster and death. An obsession with the reality of the

material world only is a sign of immaturity in both the individual and the race. As the *Katha Upanishad* says, 'Undeveloped minds desire and run after outward pleasures, and thereby enter into the wide-spread snare of death.' But the wise man as well as the wise nation will use 'temporal things and desire eternal.' For 'wise men only, knowing the nature of what is immortal, do not look for anything stable here among things unstable.'

III

The world promises things temporal; religion promises things eternal. What the world promises seems to be within our quick grasp, within easy reach, within our ability to get them, and, above all, so satisfying to our immediate needs and urges. Religion seems to promise vague and remote things; it demands, as it were, a foregoing of immediate profits, small though they be, for larger profits in the long run; and like small capitalists, few of us are willing to stake our small capital over a long period; we are satisfied with small but immediate profits. The immense profits made by large-scale manufacturers we consider beyond our reach. We admire the multi-millionaires, and look upon their achievements with wonder. But we lack their largeness of vision and adventurous daring. Eternal Life, God-realization, salvation, and all those high-sounding promises of happiness after death seem to us either dreams or, if realities, possible only to a Buddha, a Christ, or a Ramakrishna; and with our petty cleverness we believe that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, give a wide berth to the promises of religion, and avidly grasp at things temporal as the greatest prizes within the reach of man. But it is within the experience of many that things temporal do not give us that satisfaction, that happiness we have been seeking for. The prizes we have been toiling for day and night appear stale and unpalatable, once they are within our reach.

But let us not be misunderstood. We are not advocating withdrawal from the life of the world to all and sundry. Rather we are

pleading for a life with nobler ends and nobler standards of life than those which have now gripped the souls of the majority of mankind. 'The generality of mankind do more willingly listen to the world than to God; they sooner follow the desires of their own flesh than God's good pleasure.' Rather for all excepting those whose hearts are carried away completely by the ideal of immediate God-realization, we are pleading for a life with ends and standards of value in consonance with the spiritual nature of the world. Instead of an ideal of social, national, and international competition tending towards the destruction of mankind, we want people to consider the replacing of the ideals of the selfish pursuit of wealth and political power by the ideals of economic sharing with the less favoured and political uplift of the more backward peoples of the world. Nations as well as individuals, should co-operate towards the common welfare. To illustrate, take the case of the present famine that is threatening India, China, and Europe. If people were to act on the principle of 'love thy neighbour as thyself,' the rich should share to the utmost limit they can afford with the poor and starving. National and international resources should be pooled, and the deficit areas can be saved if only the same will, energy and daring, and intelligent organization that were employed to defeat the Axis powers are used again in this nobler work of alleviating suffering and saving human lives. It is certainly nobler to prevent or cure suffering than inflict it. And yet what a sorry spectacle do we see in the world around us? We follow pitiful ideals and as a result the world is being prepared for another blood-bath. How true are these words of the *Imitation of Christ*!—

For a small income a large journey is undertaken; for everlasting life many will scarce lift a foot from the ground.

The most pitiful reward is sought after; for a single piece of money sometimes there is shameful contention; for a vain matter and a slight promise men fear not to toil day and night.

But, alas! for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end they grudge even the least fatigue.

Indeed it is the irony of this blindness of selfishness that is upon men that they will spend billions in sending men to slaughter each other rather than succour millions of human beings from a grim death. In the limited social sphere also we see a tragic want of moral perspective and a callousness to the spiritual values of life. Black-marketeers, official and non-official, grow into millionaires while hundreds of their own fellow-beings are wallowing in misery and ignorance, poverty and starvation. The idea which forms the basis of social dealings, viz. every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, is one which must be banished from the minds of men. For under such a principle of social life the devil not only takes the hindmost but also the foremost in his own good time. Mr. J. C. Kumarappa writing in a recent issue of *Harijan* truly says that the way out lies only in following the ideals for which India has always stood. He says :

India has put forward a solution. Her own standard of values is signified by the status in society given to the various classes of people. The lowest are the parasites whose existence depends upon the destruction of others. Economic imperialism is of this order. Then come the predatory creatures who consume without production. To be 'drunk like a lord' cannot be an ideal with us. The aristocrats belong to this group. The next in order is the economic group—the Vaishyas. But money does not occupy the pivotal place. The upper two groups are public servants, the Kshatriyas to look after the people's needs and the Brahmins to be the custodians of culture. With this standard of

values India reached out to the remotest parts of the world carrying light and learning. This was a cultural penetration which led to peace and harmony among nations.

Under this scheme of things, self-indulgence was not the goal of life. When we emphasize indulgences the order is based on pleasures and rights. This ultimately leads to conflict and violence. If, on the other hand, we emphasize duties life comes under the control of self-discipline, and our wants are restricted. This is the basis of civilization. We have to give the highest place in society to the service of the needy.

Mr. Kumarappa is quite right so far as he goes. But one thing we would emphasize even at the risk of being misunderstood. God-realization is the goal of human life. All other activities are helpful in so far as they lead us to this end. Even the service of the needy, though in itself a high ideal, derives its value from this fact that it is a surer and easier way towards God than many others, but only if it is done in the spirit of divine brotherhood. Let us not forget the clarion call of the ancient Rishi who said :

'Here, ye children of immortal bliss ! even ye that reside in higher spheres ! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. Knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again. There is no other way.' That is the promise of religion to all those who want to overcome not only social, economic and political evils, but the still more fundamentally greater evils of birth, disease, old age, and death.

IS VEDANTA THE FUTURE RELIGION ?

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Continued)

III

What is the God of Vedantism ? He is principle, not person. You and I are all personal Gods. The absolute God of the universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe, is impersonal principle. You and I, the cat, rat, devil, and ghost, all these

are Its persons—all are personal Gods. You want to worship personal Gods. It is the worship of your own self. If you take my advice, you will never enter any church. Come out and go and wash off. Wash yourself again and again until you are cleansed of all the superstitions

that have clung to you through the ages. Or perhaps you do not like to do so, since you do not wash yourself so often in this country—frequent washing is an Indian custom, not a custom of your society.

I have been asked many times, 'Why do you laugh so much and make so many jokes?' I become serious sometimes—when I have stomach-ache! The Lord is all blissfulness. He is the reality behind all that exists, He is the goodness, the truth in everything. You are His incarnations. That is what is glorious. The nearer you are to Him, the less you will have occasions to cry or weep. The farther we are from Him, the more will long faces come. The more we know of Him, the more misery vanishes. If one who lives in the Lord becomes miserable, what is the use of living in Him? What is the use of such a God? Throw Him overboard into the Pacific Ocean! We do not want Him!

But God is the infinite, impersonal being, ever existent, unchanging, immortal, fearless, and you are all His incarnations, His embodiments. This is the God of Vedantism and His heaven is everywhere. In this heaven dwell all the personal Gods there are—you yourselves. Exit praying and laying flowers in the temples!

What do you pray for? To go to heaven, to get something and let somebody else not have it. 'Lord, I want more food! Let somebody else starve!' What an idea of God who is the reality, the infinite, ever blessed existence in which there is neither part nor flaw, who is ever free, ever pure, ever perfect! We attribute to Him all our human characteristics, functions, and limitations. He must bring us food and give us clothes. As a matter of fact we have to do all these things ourselves and nobody else ever did them for us. That is the plain truth.

But you rarely think of this. You imagine there is God of whom you are special favourites, who does things for you when you ask Him—and you do not ask of Him favours for all men, all beings, but only for yourself, your own family, your own people. When the Hindu is starving, you do not care; at

that time you do not think that the God of the Christians is also the God of the Hindus. Our whole idea of God, our praying, our worshipping, all are vitiated by our ignorance, our foolish idea of ourselves as body. You may not like what I am saying. You may curse me today, but tomorrow you will bless me.

We must become thinkers. Every birth is painful. We must get out of materialism. My Mother would not let us get out of Her clutches; nevertheless we must try. This struggle is all the worship there is; all the rest is mere shadow. You are the personal God. Just now I am worshipping you. This is the greatest prayer. Worship the whole world in that sense—by serving it. This standing on a high platform, I know, does not appear like worship. But if it is service, it is worship.

The infinite truth is never to be acquired. It is here all the time, undying and unborn. He, the Lord of the universe, is in every one. There is but one temple—the body. It is the only temple that ever existed. In this body He resides, the Lord of souls and the King of kings. We do not see that, so we make stone images of Him and build temples over them. Vedanta has been in India always, but India is full of these temples—and not only temples, but also caves containing carved images. 'The fool, dwelling on the bank of the Ganges, digs a well for water!' Such are we! Living in the midst of God—we must go and make images! We project Him in the form of the image while all the time he exists in the temple of our body. We are lunatics, and this is the great delusion.

Worship everything as God—every form is His temple. All else is delusion. Always look within, never without. Such is the God that Vedanta preaches and such is His worship. Naturally there is no sect, no creed, no caste in Vedanta. How can this religion be the national religion of India?

Hundreds of castes! If one man touches another man's food, he cries out, 'Lord help me, I am polluted!' When I returned to India after my visit to the West, several

orthodox Hindus raised a howl against my association with the Western people and my breaking the rules of orthodoxy. They did not like me to teach the truths of the Vedas to the people of the West.

But how can there be these distinctions and differences ? How can the rich man turn up his nose at the poor man, and the learned at the ignorant, if we are all spirit and all the same ? Unless society changes, how can such a religion as Vedanta prevail ? It will take thousands of years to have large numbers of truly rational human beings. It is very hard to show men new things, to give them great ideas. It is harder still to knock off old superstitions, very hard ; they do not die easily. With all his education, even the learned man becomes frightened in the dark—the nursery tales come into his mind and he sees ghosts.

The meaning of the word 'Veda,' from which the word 'Vedanta' comes, is knowledge. All knowledge is Veda, infinite as God is infinite. Nobody ever creates knowledge. Did you ever see knowledge created ? It is only discovered—what was covered is uncovered. It is always here, because it is God Himself. Past, present and future knowledge, all exist in all of us. We discover it, that is all. All this knowledge is God Himself. The Vedas are a great Sanskrit book. In our country we go down on our knees before the man who reads the Vedas, and we do not care for the man who is studying physics. That is superstition ; it is not Vedantism at all. It is utter materialism. With God every knowledge is sacred. Knowledge is God. Infinite knowledge abides within every one in the fullest measure. You are not really ignorant, though you may appear to be so. You are incarnations of God, all of you. You are the incarnations of the almighty, omnipresent, Divine Principle. You may laugh at me now, but the time will come when you will understand. You must. Nobody will be left behind.

What is the goal ? This that I have spoken of—Vedantism—is not a new religion. So old — as old as God Himself. It is not confined to any time and place, it is every-

where. Everybody knows this truth. We are all working it out. The goal of the whole universe is that. This applies even to external nature—every atom is rushing towards that goal. And do you think that any of the infinite pure souls are left without knowledge of the supreme truth ? All have it, all are going to the same goal—the discovery of their innate Divinity. The maniac, the murderer, the superstitious man, the man who is lynched in this country—all are travelling to the same goal. Only that which we do ignorantly we ought to do knowingly, and better.

The unity of all existence—you all have it already within yourselves. None was ever born without it. However you may deny it, it continually asserts itself. What is human love ? It is more or less an affirmation of that unity—'I am one with thee, my wife, my child, my friend !'—Only you are affirming the unity ignorantly. 'None ever loved the husband for the husband's sake, but for the sake of the Self that is in the husband.' The wife finds unity there. The husband sees himself in the wife—instinctively he does it, but he cannot do it knowingly, consciously.

The whole universe is one existence. There cannot be anything else. Out of diversities we are all going towards this universal existence. Families into tribes, tribes into races, races into nations, nations into humanity—how many wills going to the One ! It is all knowledge, all science—the realization of this unity.

Unity is knowledge, diversity is ignorance. This knowledge is your birthright. I have not to teach it to you. There never were different religions in the world. We are all destined to have salvation, whether we will it or not. You have to attain it in the long run and become free because it is your nature to be free. We are already free, only we do not know it, and we do not know what we have been doing. Throughout all religious systems and ideals is the same morality ; one thing only is preached : Be unselfish, love others. One says, 'Because Jehovah commanded.' 'Allah,' shouted Muhammad. Another cries, 'Jesus.' If it was only the command of Jehovah, how could it come to those who

never knew Jehovah? If it was Jesus alone who gave this command, how could anyone who never knew Jesus get it? If only Vishnu, how could the Jews get it, who never were acquainted with that gentleman? There is another source, greater than all of them. Where is it? In the eternal temple of God, in the souls of all beings from the lowest to the highest. It is there—that infinite unselfishness, infinite sacrifice, infinite compulsion to go back to unity.

We have seemingly been divided, limited, because of our ignorance, and we have become as it were the little Mrs. So-and-so and Mr. So-and-so. But all nature is giving this delusion the lie every moment. I am not that little man or little woman, cut off from all else; I am the one universal existence. The soul in its own majesty is rising up every moment and declaring its own intrinsic Divinity.

This Vedantism is everywhere, only you must become conscious of it. These masses of foolish beliefs and superstitions hinder us in our progress. If we can, let us throw them off and understand that God is spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Try to be materialists no more! Throw away all matter! The conception of God must be truly spiritual. All the different ideas of God, which are more or less materialistic, must go. As man becomes more and more spiritual he has to throw off all these ideas and leave them behind. As a matter of fact, in every country there have always been a few who have been strong enough to throw away all matter and stand out in the shining light, worshipping the spirit by the spirit.

IV

If Vedantism—this conscious knowledge that all is one spirit—spreads, the whole of humanity will become spiritual. But is it possible? I do not know. Not within thousands of years. The old superstitions must run out. You are all interested in how to perpetuate all your superstitions. Then there are the ideas of the family brother, the caste brother, the national brother. All these

are barriers to the realization of Vedanta. Religion has been religion to very few.

Most of those who have worked in the field of religion all over the world have really been political workers. That has been the history of human beings. They have rarely tried to live up uncompromisingly to the truth. They have always worshipped the god called society; they have been mostly concerned with upholding what the masses believe—their superstitions, their weakness. They do not try to conquer nature but to fit into nature, nothing else. Go to India and preach a new creed—they will not listen to it. But if you tell them it is from the Vedas—‘That is good!’ they will say. Here I can preach this doctrine and you—how many of you take me seriously? But the truth is all here, and I must tell you the truth.

There is another side to the question. Everyone says that the highest, the pure truth, cannot be realized all at once by all, that men have to be led to it gradually through worship, prayer and other kinds of prevalent religious practices. I am not sure whether that is the right method or not. In India I work both ways.

In Calcutta, I have all these images and temples—in the name of God and the Vedas, of the Bible and Christ and Buddha. Let it be tried. But on the heights of the Himalayas I have a place where I am determined nothing shall enter except pure truth. There I want to work out this idea about which I have spoken to you today. There are an Englishman and an Englishwoman in charge of the place. The purpose is to train seekers of truth and to bring up children without fear and without superstition. They shall not hear about Christs and Buddhas and Shivas and Vishnus—none of these. They shall learn from the start to stand upon their own feet. They shall learn from their childhood that God is the spirit and should be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Everyone must be looked upon as spirit. That is the ideal. I do not know what success will come of it. Today I am preaching the thing I like. I wish I had been brought up entirely on that, without all

the dualistic superstitions.

Sometimes I agree that there is some good in the dualistic method : it helps many who are weak. If a man wants you to show him the polar star, you first point out to him a bright star near it, then a less bright star, then a dim star, and then the polar star. This process makes it easy for him to see it. All the various practices and trainings, Bibles and Gods, are but the rudiments of religion, the kindergartens of religion.

But then I think of the other side. How long will the world have to wait to reach the truth if it follows this slow, gradual process ? How long ? And where is the surety that it will ever succeed to any appreciable degree ? It has not so far. After all, gradual or not gradual, easy or not easy to the weak, is not the dualistic method based on falsehood ? Are not all the prevalent religious practices often weakening and therefore wrong ? They are based on a wrong idea, a wrong view of man. Would two wrongs make one right ? Would the lie become truth ? Would darkness become light ?

I am the servant of a man who has passed away. I am only the messenger. I want to make the experiment. The teachings of Vedanta I have told you about were never

really experimented with before. Although Vedanta is the oldest philosophy in the world, it has always become mixed up with superstitions and everything else.

Christ said, 'I and my father are one,' and you repeat it. Yet it has not helped mankind. For nineteen hundred years men have not understood that saying. They make Christ the saviour of men. He is God and we are worms ! Similarly in India, in every country, this sort of belief is the backbone of every sect. For thousands of years millions and millions all over the world have been taught to worship the Lord of the world, the Incarnations, the saviours, the prophets. They have been taught to consider themselves helpless, miserable creatures and to depend upon the mercy of some person or persons for salvation. There are no doubt many marvellous things in such beliefs. But even at their best, they are but kindergartens of religion, and they have helped but little. Men are still hypnotized into abject degradation. However, there are some strong souls who get over that illusion. The hour comes when great men shall arise and cast off these kindergartens of religion and shall make vivid and powerful the true religion, the worship of the spirit by the spirit.

(Concluded)

AN ADDRESS ON THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

This is my first visit to Karachi ; and I am here as the guest of the Ramakrishna Mission. I have been their guest in distant parts of the world, and, therefore, it is nothing unusual for me to be the guest of the Ramakrishna Mission in this city.

The subject that has been prescribed for me is the subject on which Swamiji himself has been interesting large multitudes in this city during the last few years. Therefore I do not believe that I have very much

new to say. Yet it is a subject which gives you perennial inspiration.

The Bhagavad Gita is a book which has given solace to millions of our countrymen across the ages. Not only to our countrymen but to many people outside also. It is a book which has comforted souls in distress, which has healed the wounds of many people who are seriously afflicted, a book to which testimony has been paid by men of our country and abroad. The great Acharya, Shankara,

in his commentary tells us that it is an epitome of all the Shastras—Samastavedarthasarasangrahabhutam. It is the quintessence of all the Vedas and it leads to the realization of the different ends of life—Sakalapurusharthasiddhi; it enables you to realize the different ends of life—Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. It is not merely our Acharyas who have eulogized it. When Warren Hastings was writing an introduction to the first English translation of the Bhagavad Gita, he said: 'Writings like this will survive when the British Empire has lost its dominion over India; when the sources of its wealth and prosperity are lost to remembrance, this book and writings like this will survive.' He meant to say that it is a book which is neither ancient nor modern, neither eastern nor western, but a human gospel voicing forth the fundamental truths which have worked so to say into the very structure of humanity. It belongs to the very life-blood of the human soul. It does not deal with any sectarian gospel. It doesn't give you any dogma. It doesn't insist on the celebration of certain ceremonies or subscription to certain formulae but it gives to you certain root conceptions, certain fundamental ideas which are bound to prevail so long as human nature continues to be what it is. Only the other day in a book published by the Ramakrishna Mission, Aldous Huxley wrote an introduction in which he says to this effect: 'Here is a most comprehensive statement of perennial philosophy. If you want a book which will assist humanity in striving for the eternal, here is the book, the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution, of enduring value to mankind.' You find, therefore, the book has been appreciated by people in India as well as outside.

In a single discourse it will not be possible for me to dwell at great length on the different aspects of that great gospel. All that I wish to do is to invite your attention to certain fundamental features thereof. You will find in the closing chapters it is said, 'Brahma Vidya Yoga Shastra Krishna-Arjuna Samvada.' Take those three words: (i) Brahma

Vidya is the metaphysical statement of Reality. It gives you a logical account of what reality is. (ii) Yoga Shastra indicates to you the pathway to the attainment of that Reality. (iii) Krishna-Arjuna Samvada: it is the culmination when the human soul is in communion with the Divine, when the naked individual stands alone before the Alone. Krishna the Divine and Arjuna the human soul having converse or communion with each other. Metaphysics, ethics, and religion: Brahma Vidya is a metaphysical theory of Reality; Yoga Shastra is the ethical pathway to it; Krishna-Arjuna Samvada is spiritual realization of the attainment of the Supreme.

I propose to draw your attention to a few of these aspects. Brahma Vidya, I said, is a metaphysical statement. Well, here in India we never ask the intellect to be suppressed. We never say—'Obey and ask no questions.' The classic on the Brahma Vidya is the *Brahma Sutra*. It opens with the Sutra 'Athato brahmajijnasa'—now therefore an enquiry into Brahman. Jijnasa—an investigation, an intellectual enquiry—a logical approach. That is what it tells you. And how do you approach the problem of metaphysics? The second Sutra tells you 'Janmadyasya yatah.' Is there a Reality from which all these things issue? That second Sutra has reference to the Bhrigu-valli of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, where the pupil approaches the teacher and asks him 'Adhihi bhagavo brahmeti.' 'Teach me, O Master, what is Brahman?' And the answer given is 'Tapasa brahma vijijnasasva.' By independent reflection, by your mental austerity, try to understand what Brahman or the fundamental Reality is. Brahman is that from which all things arise, by which they are maintained, into which they are dissolved. 'Yato va imani bhutani jayante yena jatani jivanti yat prayantya bhisamvishanti tat brahma.' Try to find out what that ultimate principle is, which is the explanation of all this cosmic evolution. The pupil proceeds step by step. He says:—May matter be Brahman—Annam brahma. Second, may

life be Brahman—Pranam brahma. Third, may animal mind be Brahman—Mano brahma. Fourth, may human intellect be the Brahman—Vijnanam brahma. He looks at the world. He finds out that there is an order, there is an amazing progression, that things have evolved from unconscious matter or Anna to life in the plant world, from the plant world to Manas of the animal world, from the animal world to the human mind or the world of Vijnana. There has been an upward growth in evolution. It cannot be due to an unholy void. Caprice cannot be the root of things. There is an order; there is a progress and we go step by step. Such an orderly progressive ascent of the cosmic evolution requires a fundamental principle informing it, animating it, leading it to rise from one stage to another. Therefore the answer is given 'Anandam brahma.' There is a fundamental Reality, Divine Bliss, which is operating in all these stages which is the cause of this multiple play of the manifested world. There is one Supreme Reality without which you cannot account for this steady, onward, upward growth of matter to life, of life to mental consciousness, of mental consciousness to human intelligence, of human intelligence to Divine Bliss. This very ascent is an indication of the orderliness of the world, of the progressiveness of the world, and wherever you have order and progress there must be a controlling and guiding agency at work. It cannot be the human mind which is only the product or the outcome. There must therefore be a divine principle.

How shall we account for that divine principle? What is the name which we shall give to it? Will it be possible for us to give any kind of explanation for it? Here we are, atoms in an empirical universe bound up in the world of space and time, striving to explore the nature of that unknown principle which stands behind. Is it possible for our finite intellect to fathom that infinite wealth of Reality? The answer is 'We cannot.' 'Yatho vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha'—that from which words turn away along with the mind, baffled; we cannot ex-

plain it. The only way, in which we can express it, is to say: if this is the empirical world which is lost in space, time, and cause, it is something beyond space, beyond time, and beyond cause. 'Yat tat adreshyam agrahyam achakshushrotram tadapanipadam.' We can only say that it is something invisible, intangible; something which eludes words of mouth, categories of logic, something which stands above them all. They all expose their utter impotence or inadequacy when they try to account for that kind of Supreme Reality. *Silence has been the attitude which the greatest of our thinkers have adopted. The austerity of silence is the homage which the finite mind pays to the infinite riches of that Supreme Reality.* Buddha kept silence. Shankara said 'Shantoyam Atma.' No description can be given of it. They were all bringing out the ineffable character of that supreme principle—calm, tranquil—which is still there, animating the progress of the whole evolution. Is it possible for us to be satisfied with that kind of negative account? No. While on one side it eludes description, we, at the same time know, that it is the fundamental reality governing this universe. It is the animating principle which is not only Para Brahman, it is also Parameswara—Iswara as the Lord of the world. We need not put Him as merely the supreme governor of the universe. If you are able to fold up your animal ways, if you are able to strip yourself naked, if you are able to have what you call 'Vastrapaharana,' if you throw away your body, mind, intellect, you come in contact with the conception of universal awareness without which there can be no body, no mind, no intellectual functioning. All these are to be regarded as nothing more than the canalization of that supreme consciousness which is lurking behind these external manifestations of the human soul. In other words, the same Reality is Para Brahman when you look upon it as transcending the world. It is Parameswara when you look upon it as the ruler of the world. It is Paramatman when you look upon it as the central source of your very being. It is the

transcendent, cosmic, and individual aspects as the *Bhagavata* puts it. 'Vadanti tat tatvavidah tatvam yad jnanam advayam, brahmeti paramatmeti bhagavan iti sabdyate.' Whether you call it Brahman, whether you call it Paramatman, whether you call it Bhagavan, it makes absolutely no kind of difference. It is merely a standpoint which you are adopting. If the Supreme Lord is to be regarded as the governor of the universe, if He is to be put up as Saswata-dharmagopta, as the Eternal Lord of righteousness, if this is the function which you attribute to Him, it follows that whenever there is a disturbance in the world, whenever you find a disturbance in the moral equilibrium of the world, that Supreme Reality which is manifesting itself in you and in the finite world, will also, out of the plenitude of its wealth and compassion, show itself in particular historical manifestations. When wickedness and unrighteousness grow, when the strong trample upon the weak—when such a condition arises, to use the words of the poet, : He comes, comes, ever comes.' Shankaracharya says in his introduction to the commentary on the Gita :—

Sa cha bhagavan jnanaishwaryabala-
viryatejobhih sada sampannah trigunat-
mikam vaishnavim swam mayam mula-
prakritim vashikritya, ajo avyayo bhutanam
ishwaro nityashuddhabuddhamuktaswa-
bhavo api san swamayaya dehavan iva jata
iva cha lokanugraham kurvan lakshyate.

On such occasions, He manifests Himself as a historical individual for the uplift of humanity.

Do not run away with the idea that the supreme revelation is a particular unique thing. It is a universal incarnation. It is an incarnation which can be brought about by every individual. The birth of Krishna is described : When Tamas predominates, when it is all night, when you do not see a single ray of light, the imprisoned splendour in each individual shines forth. He is there. The Paramatman is lurking in the depth of each man's being. But He is wrapped up in all these Koshas or sheaths. So long as the

individual takes interest in, concentrates his attention on, these objective manifestations, that Pure Subject eludes any kind of handling. It is when we are able to stand above all these objectifications that we are able to arrive at what may be called the pure subjectivity. A Jesus had to cry in sheer despair, 'O God, why hast Thou forsaken me.' It is a moment when the whole earth seemed to be cracking under his feet. When he sees no hope, when he gives up all his hope, then it is that he sees a gleam of light and says : *Thy will be done*. Similarly Draupadi in a moment of despair simply cried out, 'I have no husband, I have no brothers, I have nobody in this world, even You O God, even You are dead for me.' It is at that moment that she cried that everything had appeared to her to be an utter blank. It is at such a moment when the wrappings fall out, when the scales drop off from our eyes, that we will see divine light, active divine power.

Similarly when Arjuna was called upon to do his fighting, when he withdrew from it and said, 'Why should I do what is socially commanded, why should I conform to what society expects of me? These social demands, these individual demands, are nothing to me; I am frail, I am incompetent, I am in despair; won't You help me?'—it is at such a moment that the Supreme came to the rescue of Arjuna. Whether it is Draupadi, or Arjuna, or Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter. So long as the individual is lost in the pre-occupations of this world, he centres his hope on them and he is not able to detach himself altogether from these externalizations, from these objectifications, there is no rise of the Lord in him.

The birth of Krishna at the dead of night is merely the birth of Krishna or God in each human soul when the rest of the world becomes completely a night to us. When it is possible for us to lose faith in them all, and when that external light seems to be utter darkness, then that inward light will reveal itself. So, this incarnation is not to be regarded as a particular kind of interference with the course of the world. It is to be

regarded as the universal destiny of man. We are here for the purpose of realizing the divinity which happens to be in us. The metaphysical discussion does not ask you to accept anything on authority. It merely puts before you the nature of the evolution, the necessity for a supreme principle of mind, the principle which governs the universe. If He is a governor of the universe, He must take interest in the affairs of the world, and each of us can realize the divinity within us by proceeding through pathways appropriate to each.

The second point is Yoga Shastra. It is the ethical pathway. It is the discipline which we have to adopt. It is easy for most of us to get up and say, 'I believe in God,' and every moment do things that deny that belief. There is a difference between the decision of the intellect and the dynamic power of your life. It is essential for you to distinguish between Asti Brahman and Aham Brahman. It is easy for us to say there is God. It is difficult for us to say I have felt the Divine Reality in the pulse of my being; I have felt it in the blood of my heart; I believe in God even as I believe in this world. Unless we are in a position to say that God as Truth is realized by us, we cannot be supposed to be truly spiritual beings. Metaphysical definition, logical acceptance is quite different from practical realization. We must be able to realize God in the depths of our consciousness. How can we do it? Here it is that the three methods of Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti are placed before us. There are men who are intellectually inclined, and for them the process is a process of concentration and abstraction from the outward.

When Pythagoras was asked to define what a philosopher's function was, he said, 'We all go to the feast of life: some of us to make money, others to win name and fame, still others to look on. These lookers-on are the philosophers.'

Plato said, 'Philosophers are the spectators of all time and all space.' Time and space are the outward objectives; the spectator is the inward principle of consciousness. Unless

it is possible for you to discriminate between the Self or the Atman, and time and space which are the object or the Anatman, unless you are able to withdraw the Atman from the Anatman, to discriminate between the Pure Self which is the mere looker-on and the objective self more or less engaged in the pursuits of this world—it is not possible for you to attain to that pure subjectivity which eludes any kind of objectification. There it is that the method of Dhyana Yoga is prescribed for us. You must be alone. But physical loneliness is not enough. We can shut ourselves in a room and harbour all kinds of miscellaneous thoughts in our minds. If you want to be your true self, you must be able to control the turbulent desires and the glamour of your passions. That is what it means when the Gita says 'Yatachittatma.' You must be detached. You must not have any kind of expectation of results or fruits. Aparigraha means 'free from possessiveness'—the most insidious enemy of any kind of high life. When Jesus was approached by a man who said to him, 'I have observed all the commandments, I have obeyed the laws, what else have I to do to attain the Kingdom of Heaven?' he said, 'Go and sell all that thou hast and distribute it to the poor.' He never returned to Jesus. Aparigraha indicates non-possessiveness. You must not have any kind of belongings which attach you to this world. That kind of detachment is absolutely essential. Now Dhyana Yoga is the method by which the mind abstracts from all outward objects not theoretically but practically, without having any kind of interest in the occupations of the world—'Yatachittatma, Nirashih, Aparigraha.'

These are very difficult requirements. And most of us are incapable of them. For us there is the other method, the method of Bhakti, passivity, surrender, acceptance, claiming nothing, asking nothing. We place ourselves in the hands of the Divine completely. These are passive virtues, virtues which are regarded as more feminine than masculine. Therefore it is said that there

is only one Supreme male in this world. All of us are to be regarded as women. 'Stri-prayam itarat sarvam.' In other words, our attitude must be of prayerfulness, must be one of dependence, of complete surrender, passivity, acceptance. Don't claim anything. Ask only for the blessings of the Divine. That is the Bhakti Marga. It is possible for us to adopt this method more easily. The Gopi goes about praying to God, appealing to Him to become her husband—'katiyayani, mahadevi, sarvalokamaheshwari, Nandagopasutam devi asmakam pati. . . .' 'I prostrate myself to you, O Mahadevi; may the Lord of Gopis, the son of Nanda be my husband.'

Well, when Rasalila is talked about, the meaning of it is that there is the Universal Lord petitioned and appealed to and begged for favour by all the individuals of the world. The integrity of that one Supreme Spirit is not in any manner affected by the approaches made by millions of individuals. The universality of spirit and the multiplicity of the begging individuals, that is what is attempted to be brought out by what is called Rasalila. One Supreme Lord faces each individual and because He faces some, it does not follow that He does not face others. Well, that is the idea which is brought out by the conception of the Rasalila which has been so thoroughly misunderstood by foreigners and, in their wake, misinterpreted and misconceived by some of our people also.

You will find therefore it is the method of Bhakti, it is the method of devotion; there is still another for those of executive temperament, who are not made in a reflective or emotional way. Arjuna himself belongs to that class. He gets up and says, 'I know I am a Kshatriya. I know it is my duty to fight. But I shall not fight. This is not a thing which I will be able to do. I shall not undertake this fight which has been imposed on me.' And what happens to him?

We all see that when duty seems to be irksome, when we find we have to carry a share of pain and unpleasantness, we wish to withdraw from the mandate which is imposed on us. We invent all sorts of excuses for the

purpose of getting away from what is expected. Ultimately, however, Arjuna is able to enter into the truth of things, that is, to believe in the spirit which is driving the universe, which is driving him also; and he concludes by saying, 'Karishye vachanam tava,' 'I will do as you bid me do.' Similarly, you will find that Jesus Christ raised up his hands and said, 'No, I cannot bear all this suffering. Take this cup away from me. This suffering is too much for me. I cannot undertake it.' And yet after so much storm and stress he comes to the conclusion, *Thy will be done*. Yet not my will but Thy will be done. That is what Jesus Christ said, exactly a translation of 'Karishye vachanam tava.' 'Your bidding I'll carry out.' Both Arjuna and Jesus first of all wanted that the cup of suffering should be taken away from them. Arjuna did not wish to fight and Jesus was unable to drink the cup; and Christ said, 'Take this cup away;' 'Please excuse me, I shall not fight,' said Arjuna. But both of them pass through so much of spiritual evolution that a situation arises when they are able to get up and say, 'Yet not my will but Thy will be done.' In other words it is possible for human individuals without any kind of selfish desire of their own to make themselves the instruments of the cosmic powers, to understand that they are here not merely for the satisfaction of their individual preferences but for co-operating with the universal purpose by realizing that there is a universal purpose. You merely merge yourselves in that purpose and conform to the divine will and, in the process, reach your own perfect fulfilment.

So, by acting according to the dictates of the Divine, it is possible for you to realize the highest possibilities which are already located in you.

Hence it is said that even action, which seems to us to be dirty, seems to us so unpleasant and unpalatable that we would like to avoid and shrink from it, becomes sometimes the end of God, and we may have to undertake it, and, by undertaking it, do the will of God and know His purpose and under-

stand His Reality much more than by the avoidance of action. The *Vishnu Purana* says, 'Those people who merely cry out the name of God without doing His will are the enemies of God.' 'Svadharmakarmavimukhah krishna krishneti vadinah; te harerdveshino mudhah dharmartham janma yadi hareh.' Those who are indifferent to their duties in this world but only go about uttering the name of Krishna, Krishna,—they are the enemies of God; they are ignorant, deluded mortals. Even Hari, for the bonds of creation, for the upliftment of this world, passed through so many kinds of perils. When He has set an example for us, is it right for us to withdraw from the world, from the work which the world demands? Whether it is Dhyana Yoga, Bhakti Marga, or Karma Yoga, whichever method you adopt, the Ultimate Reality is that transcendence of the human individual. He is able to get beyond himself; he is detaching himself from the objective surroundings altogether. He is able to adopt an attitude of a detached spectator when he is undertaking the work in this world. Such an individual is what we call a God-realized soul. Such an individual is one who is face to face with the Supreme. He has touched the garment of Eternity. His mind becomes illumined by the divine light. His heart is a flame of love and his whole being thirsts for the uplift of suffering humanity. You will see therefore that the highest purpose which is laid on each individual is not merely to be born, to grow up, to mate, to found a family and leave possessions for posterity, and then pass out; such things are done by even the animals. What the human individual is called upon to do is to realize the Divinity that is there embedded in him.

There are two things for which there is an alternative choice before each human individual. 'Yasya chahaya amritam yasya mrityuh.' There are possibilities in each one of us of either Amrita, of eternal life, or Mrityu, of death and ashes. Well, if you want to develop Amrita in you, you have to pursue the path of Truth. If on the other

hand you want to pass off from death to death, then it is that you are more or less wrapped up in this glamorous world. The highest goal which the Bhagavad Gita puts before us is the goal of practical efficiency combined with philosophic calm. The very last verse of the Bhagavad Gita winds up by saying 'Yatra yogeshwarah Krishno yatra Partho dhanurdharah tatra shrir vijayo bhutih dhruva nitir matirmama.' The words are selected deliberately with a definite purpose. The Yoga, the contemplative energy of Krishna, that by itself is nothing. You require the archery of Arjuna. Not only the philosopher Yogi, but you require the practical man, the king, the philosopher-king of Plato. The Yogi and the Dhyani pouring the energy of contemplation into the austerity of action, combining the two things, bringing about the marriage of contemplation and action, of Dhyana and Karma—that is the goal which the Gita has prescribed for us. If you just see what the gospel of the Bhagavad Gita is, you will see it has nothing to do with any kind of ill-founded fact or unscientific dogma. It takes human nature as it is. It studies its aspiration for the eternal. It prescribes a way by which that aspiration for the eternal can be realized. It does not want you to surrender your reflective, emotional, or practical natures. It merely tells you that man is here on the threshold of a higher life; he has reached intellectuality, but the climb of life indicates that this is not the goal of evolution. He has to proceed further; that further process cannot be in the development of his physique. It can only be in the development of his psyche, and, if it is so, then human intellectuality will have to be converged into illumined consciousness, into inspired understanding; that acquisition of increased awareness, that expansion of your being, that prolongation of those great moments when human individuals now and then come into touch with the Eternal, when they are, so to say, lifted from this *terra firma* into uplifting air, when they are carried away into the depths of that being, when time

stands still, when they are able to have a glimpse into that fundamental Reality of which immortality and death are merely the shadows. If you are able to realize that destiny, you have realized true fulfilment. But if you have not, you might acquire possessions, you might build material worlds, you might invent atom-bombs and devastate people, but you have failed as a human being.

When you realize that goal, 'kulam pavitram janani kritartha vasundhara punyavati,' your mother becomes blessed and the place that gave you birth becomes sacred. If it is possible for you to realize even now in this physical frame, that life incorruptible, that life which is the destiny of every human being, then it is that the human self has reached its goal!

SOME ASPECTS OF SHANKARA'S PHILOSOPHY

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According to Shankara's Advaita philosophy, in its practical aspect, it is the consciousness of the identity of the Self with all and the feeling of unadulterated love generated from this sense of unity for all the embodiments of the Self, that should be at the basis of our conduct in all the spheres of our life. All our duties, domestic, social, national, and international, and even our duties to subhuman creatures, should arise from and be governed by this consciousness of unity expressed in the feeling of love. Self-realization—the realization of Brahman in the self and all—being the ultimate ideal of life, whatever thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions, whatever forms of behaviour, emphasize the differences between man and man, between the self and others, and strengthen the sense of difference in the human mind, are condemned. All antagonism, rivalry, competition, hatred, fear, etc., Shankara teaches us, arise from the want of true self-knowledge and true self-love, from attachment to unsubstantial things, from pursuit of illusions. In truth, the good of each consists in contribution to the good of all. It is through the cultivation of sincere love for all and the performance of disinterested works for the good of all, that a man can advance in the path of self-realization and shake off the sense of difference which puts obstacles in this path. Self-sacrifice in active life is the path to self-realization. The

services which a man renders for the good of the family, the society, the nation, the humanity and the animal world, contribute to the realization of his own self in all. Shankara thus bridges over the apparent gulf between self-love and benevolence, between selfishness and self-sacrifice, between individualism and socialism or humanism. A man must cultivate purity and charity, truth and love, self-confidence and humility, strength and softness, faith in the inner goodness of himself and that of all others, in all his thoughts, words, and deeds in order that his self may shine in its true universal and blissful character. Does it not raise morality to a higher spiritual plane? Does it not furnish us with a positive and dynamic morality?

The religious sects generally accuse Shankara of denying the personality of God as the ultimate truth. They think that Shankara's Advaita-vada cuts at the root of positive religion by regarding Brahman as an Impersonal Being. The inner beauty of his doctrine is generally ignored. From the practical view-point, Shankara, by emphasizing the impersonal or super-personal character of the Absolute Spirit, has really supplied all the religious systems of the world with a philosophical basis and brought about harmony and unity among them all. Personal God is certainly the object of worship to all religious men. But the conceptions of Personal God are different in different religi-

ous sects. It is the differences of conceptions about the divine Personality that give rise to differences among the religious sects and alienate the sects from one another. It is these differences that become the sources of bigotry, fanaticism, narrowness of outlook, and bitter antagonism among the followers of particular religious communities. Various disturbances in human society have been due to these differences among the religionists, and many irreligious acts have been perpetrated in the name of religion and God.

The conceptions about the nature of God differ so widely in the religious sects that they seem to worship different gods. The God of the Vaishnavas, the God of the Shaivas, the God of the Shaktas, the God of the Christians, the God of the Mohammedans, are different gods, and as such they divide humanity into narrow-minded religious groups. It is an irony of fate that religion which is resorted to for emancipation from all bondages and limitations, all conflicts and discords, all ignoble thoughts, feelings, and desires, becomes itself the source of fresh bondages and limitations, new conflicts and hostilities, various evil thoughts, ill feelings, and undesirable desires and actions in relation to fellow men.

Acharya Shankara wants to cut at the root of all such differences and discords by proclaiming that Brahman is really impersonal or supra-personal, that He is the One Self of all persons,—that Personal God, in whatever name He may be addressed, in whatever form He may be worshipped, whatever powers and attributes and activities may be ascribed to Him, is the same Brahman, the same Impersonal Absolute Spirit, conceived with the aid of and in identification with diverse names and forms and diverse glorious powers and attributes. It is the same Brahman that is worshipped by the devotees of all religious sects, however they may differ in their conceptions about Him. The Impersonal Brahman is really beyond the reach of thought and speech. He is unconditioned by all powers and attributes, He is above all relations and limitations. When-

ever we try to form any conception about Him, we must necessarily conceive Him in terms of powers and attributes and relations and expressions, which are within the range of our thought and imagination, and it is these which constitute His personality. The Impersonal is the Soul, and Personality is His embodiment. We conceive and worship the Impersonal in and through our conception and worship of the Personal. The differences arise in our conceptions, in the names and forms in terms of which we conceive the Reality, in the ideas of powers, attributes, self-expressions, and relations we ascribe to Him. Such differences are inevitable. But we must bear in mind that these differences are in our conceptions, and not in the Reality, not in the Absolute Spirit. When the mind of the religious man is perfectly concentrated upon the supreme object of his worship and meditation, the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped vanishes, the personality of the worshipper as well as the personality of God vanishes, the consciousness of the differences between the self and God and the diversities of the world vanishes, and one non-dual absolute consciousness alone shines in its own perfection. Thus all deeply religious men, in whatever names and forms they may worship and meditate on God, ultimately reach the same goal, the same absolute unity of self-luminous experience.

Thus the doctrine of Impersonal Brahman supplies the basis of unity and harmony among all religious sects and puts an end to the quarrels among the various diverse orders of votaries of a Personal God. The theistic schools may quarrel with one another about the nature of Personal God, but Shankara's Advaita-vada is not at war with any of them. It gives us the basis of reconciliation among all religious doctrines which are founded on diverse conceptions about God and His relation to man and the world. Thus Shankara's religion is not a sectarian religion; it is the Religion of Humanity, the universal religion.

Shankara's Advaita is not only not incompatible with the wide-spread sectarian

religions which are based upon some philosophical conceptions of Divinity; but is not even incompatible with the worship of illustrious national saints and heroes (Rishis and Avataras), the worship of personified supernatural powers and moral ideals (gods and goddesses), the worship of fire, water, air, earth, mountains, rivers, trees, etc. conceived as deities, the worship of images and idols, natural and artificial things, conceived as embodiments of the Divine. Brahman, the one Supreme Spirit, is the soul of all men and animals, all supernatural and natural forces, all moral and spiritual ideals, all products of nature and products of human hands. Sarvam khalu idam Brahma—all this is really Brahman. All the phenomenal realities of our experience and the objects of our conceptions and imaginations are appearances of Brahman, individualized embodiments of Brahman. Everything is Brahman with a particular name and form, with particular powers and attributes, with particular relations and actions. Men ordinarily worship glorified names and forms, powers and attributes which inspire them with awe, wonder, admiration, love and reverence. They worship their own conceptions, their own ideals in diverse embodiments. Shankara teaches us that Brahman is the soul of all names and forms, all powers and attributes. As we must worship the soul with the help of the bodies, as we must worship the inconceivable with the help of conceptions, as we must worship the nameless and formless with the help of names and forms, there is nothing wrong or condemnable, nothing offensive or repulsive, in the worship of Him in the forms of particular deities or particular men or particular animals or material things or particular images or idols. Thus Shankara affiliated all the traditional forms of worship, all the old and new systems of religion, all kinds of idolatry and fetishism, with his sublime and all-comprehensive Advaita-vada, and he enlightened and ennobled them all. He taught all the devotees of all religious sects to see the same Spirit in all the deities, in all the idols, in all the objects

of worship. All religious sects were thus bound together with a sense of fellowship. No religious order was required to abandon its distinctive character, its special conception of Divinity, its particular mode of worship and spiritual discipline. Each was taught to approach the same spiritual goal through its distinctive form of spiritual culture. He taught the inner unity of all religions. He left no room for religious quarrels. It is for this reason that Hinduism is the mother and nurse of so many religions and that with so many religions within its fold it is still one living religion. It is on this account again that Hinduism has the potency of embracing Christianity and Islam also in its lap and accepting them as particular forms of itself.

Thus the charges brought against Shankara's Advaita-vada from standpoints of practical religion and practical morality are found to be baseless. Shankara has given us a grand message of spiritual unity which is ennobling and inspiring to the human character from every point of view. We are taught by him to realize our essential unity with all through the proper regulation of our thoughts and feelings, our desires and actions, all the functions of our body and senses and mind. In our active life we are instructed to love and serve all, and to be conscious of our inner unity with all our fellow-beings. His teachings rouse self-confidence in the weak and the poor and the depressed, teach humility to the strong and the rich and the arrogant, liberalize the minds of all sections of humanity and bring about peace, harmony, mutual love and respect, equality and fraternity and liberty in human society.

But the very first charge remains unanswered. The world being declared false, how can the people, brought up under the influence of this philosophy, be prompted to exert themselves for the physical health, material prosperity, earthly comforts, and worldly knowledge, either of themselves or of others? Does not Shankara's philosophy naturally make them sullenly indifferent to all these illusory objects and turn them to be anti-social, anti-national, and anti-humanitarian?

Now, what does Shankara mean by his doctrine of the falsity of the world? Has he anywhere preached that the world, as we experience it in our normal life, does not exist, that it has no objective reality? He has strongly refuted the views of those philosophers who hold that the world has only a subjective existence, that it consists essentially of the ideas or imaginations of the finite minds. He has consistently preached that the world of experience is as real as the experiencing minds and even as real as the Personal God, who is the Lord of all minds and all material objects. The plurality of subjects and the plurality of objects are equally real, and they are governed by the physical, moral, and spiritual laws of the omnipotent and omniscient Lord. But they are all relative to one another. The finite spirits exist in relation to the world and the Lord, the world exists in relation to the finite spirits and the Lord, and the Lord exists in relation to the finite spirits and the world. The existence of each of them is relative. Apart from relations they have no existence. The illusoriness of the plurality of individual selves and worldly objects does not mean their non-existence, but their non-self-existence, their relative, contingent, dependent, non-eternal existence. Brahman alone is self-existent, and He is the true Self of the experiencing subjects, the experienced objects, and the divine Lord of them. The ultimate mission of the life of each individual person is to discover Brahman in himself, to discover Brahman in every conscious being, and to discover Brahman in all the objects of the world.

This ideal prompts us to adore ourselves, to adore our fellow-beings, to adore the objective world, and not to be sullenly indifferent to them. The ideal can be realized, Shankara teaches us, only through the thorough discipline of the body and the mind. This discipline does not consist in suppressing them, in encouraging physical and mental lethargy, but in developing them fully, in actualizing their good and great possibilities. This can be done through the acquisi-

tion of knowledge, the performance of duties, the ennoblement of character, the widening of the sphere of action, the cultivation of love, sympathy, fellow-feeling, service and sacrifice. Every individual must advance in the path of perfect self-realization as a useful and unselfish member of the family, the society, the nation, and humanity. Accordingly Shankara lays great emphasis upon the need of strict adherence to Varnashrama Dharma. He exhorts every Brahmin to be a true Brahmin, every Kshatriya to be a true Kshatriya, every Vaishya to be a true Vaishya, every Shudra to be a true Shudra, in order that each may rise to the full stature of his manhood through the earnest and faithful performance of duties which his position in the family, the society, and the State demands of him. Every man should, in his early life (Brahmacharya), fully develop, through proper self-restraint and self-culture, the powers of his body, the powers of his senses, the powers of his intellect, the powers of his heart, and should form adequate acquaintance with the laws of physical and mental nature and the ways of the world, so that in his fully grown youth he may be an efficient Grihastha,—an able and noble and useful member of the family, the society, and the State. He should then make proper use of the worldly materials for performing Yajnas (sacrifices) for the good of the world, without undue attachment to them. In his advanced years he should progressively turn to contemplative life and life of perfect renunciation. The active life of a man should not be a life of unhealthy competition, rivalry, hostility, fear, hatred, and envy, but a life of mutual love and service, a life dedicated to the worship of the Supreme Spirit in the form of the family, society, the nation, humanity, and the animal world. Those who have the Vaishya spirit in them should increase the wealth of the country. Those who have the Kshatriya spirit in them should, when necessary, fight for the good of the society. Those who are skilled or unskilled labourers should render services to society ungrudgingly in accordance with their capacities. The intel-

lectualists should make cultural contributions to the human race. In this way, all individuals, all communities, all castes, all classes should, in their practical life, regard themselves as self-conscious and self-determining limbs of the social or national organism and dedicate themselves freely, voluntarily, intelligently, and efficiently to the worship of the whole organism. This should help them practically in realizing their unity with others, the identity of their own self with the self of all others. At the same time there should be proper training and discipline of their body and mind for the progressive realization of their True Self.

In none of his teachings does Shankara encourage an inactive life,—a life indifferent to duties and responsibilities of our self-conscious and self-determining phenomenal existence. A life of inaction and Tamasic indifference is not necessary for, but is a formidable obstacle to, the realization of the True Self. Self-realization is not the negation of action but the perfection of self-consciousness and freedom, the consciousness of all as one's own self and free loving service

to all. Karma or the voluntary and earnest performance of duties according to one's capacity and station in life is taught by Shankara as the necessary preparation for self-realization, for the realization of Brahman in the self and all.

Thus the accusation against Shankara's philosophy that it stands in the way of the military strength, the material prosperity, the political organization, and the earthly happiness of the Indian nation and is the cause of the indifferent and other-worldly attitude of the Indian people is groundless.

Shankara is really one of the greatest nation-builders India has ever produced and one of the greatest world teachers the world has ever produced. In the modern age Swami Vivekananda took up the banner of Acharya Shankara and presented him in the true light to modern India and the modern world. He sought to reconstruct the present Indian nation on the basis of Shankara's philosophy and to make India the spiritual Guru of the world on the glory of the Advaita philosophy.

LIMITATIONS OF THOUGHT

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No two writers have used the words 'thought,' 'emotion,' and 'reason' in the same sense; and it would be equally true to say that few writers have shown anything like consistency in the use of these words on different occasions. This indifference or carelessness has not unoften introduced confusion in the realm of speculation, and has made it well-nigh impossible for great thinkers to arrive at correct conclusions. All differences in the metaphysical world could be easily traced back to the inability of various thinkers to come to an agreed definition of these terms. On the right understanding of their true significance depends a correct and adequate knowledge of life and its working. It would be sheer arrogance

on the part of the present writer to presume to speak with anything like a claim to finality, yet it would be doing yeoman's service to initiate discussion on a subject of such universal importance and vital significance.

It has to be understood at the outset that the problem is of metaphysical import. It cannot be solved with the help of psychological or physiological theories. Those who make an attempt to interpret these words in terms of organic 'disturbances' or 'reactions' to the environment simply await disillusionment, their efforts being directed to channels that are ill-fitted to produce results which can produce complete satisfaction. Even psychology hopelessly confines our view to what 'appears' at the surface of life as a

result of 'experiences' or 'experiments' and does not, perhaps cannot, advance to what may be termed the real essence of life. No accumulation or aggregation of the data derived from what 'appears' can enable us to jump at what 'is'; the series that begins with what 'appears' may end with what 'may be.' Yet it can never bring us face to face with what 'is.' The findings of psychology, useful as they are in their own sphere of 'practical life' which they try, and not without remarkable success, to explain, can never, by their very nature, dive deep below the surface and talk of fundamentals which alone can throw perpetual light on the deep and abiding problems of life that interest not only for the moment but solve eternal difficulties and pave the way for enduring knowledge in the light of which all else can be explained.

An erroneous approach to this problem is fraught with evil consequences in that it is responsible for such half-truths as 'thought is opposed to and is usually inhibited by emotion', or that 'reason leads to truth and emotion to pleasure'. It is not infrequently held by people that reason is a matter for the head and emotion for the heart and not *vice versa*. That there is matter enough in these statements no sane person can deny, but that they constitute the final truth is nothing short of absurdity born of ignorance. That reason and emotion represent different activities of the individual is admitted on all hands; even let it be conceded, without fear of contradiction, that they are apparently opposed to one another, yet it would be a travesty of facts if we refused to see points of contact, agreement, and mutual concord between them. Ultimately they are the same in essence though they constitute the different facts of a prism which reflects the light of truth in a variety of ways.

Evolution is either a gradual unfolding or manifestation in time of a spiritual force which is variously termed as life-force, *elan vital*, Being, Spirit or the Absolute; else it is the *développement* of the organism through natural selection, whose epiphenomenal pro-

duct is Life. According to the former theory life is the first term in the series of evolution, according to the latter it is the last. It is a highly involved and difficult problem with inherent difficulties that baffle all attempts at a satisfactory solution. The theory of Natural Selection, though scientific, being demonstrative, is defective since it leaves much, if not all, to chance; whereas the other theory better accords with facts in so far as it explains progress as the realization of an end or purpose. We shall accordingly start on the assumption that Life or Consciousness is seeking expression or perfection through constant efforts at the complete realization of its possibilities and potentialities. Perfect self-realization is the end or purpose of the whole series of evolution. Life has a spiritual basis. All life is activity and activity comprises of the expression of some *force* which we may, for convenience' sake, call *vita spiritus*. Every object is the expression of a reality which cannot but express itself, as no reality can be imagined which fails to express itself. Reality is what the philosophers call Being and expression is what they term as Becoming. The two differ exactly in the sense in which a pure feeling differs from its verbal expression. Being is expressive consciousness and becoming is conscious expression. The will of the 'one' to become 'many' is at the root of the creation—the world of 'becoming.'

Being in order to 'become' must, in the first instance, become its 'other'; this otherness is what some philosophers have called the process of solidification. The self becomes its opposite, not-self. Being is marked by its simplicity and integrity; becoming, on the other hand, is a gradual process of complication or intensification and is characterized by an endless variety. Becoming involves growth and development; it has a richness and wealth; its intricacies and complexities assume proportions that confound, bewilder and even perturb the mind. The process of becoming can be explained with the help of an illustration. The lines 'My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky', express the

integrity of a feeling which is simple and indivisible, yet it is expressed through the medium of words strung together to form sentences which can be subjected to the rules of prosody and grammar that had the least to do with the original feeling. A simple feeling thus gets split up into component parts, which when studied apart from the whole, appear to present a growth and evolution leading to a perfection which is ultimately identical with the original feeling. Sitting on the bank of the Shesh Nag, a lake far in the interior of Kashmir, where it flows down into the form of the river Jhelum, I could vividly imagine to myself the relation between Being and Becoming. On my left hand there was the mighty lake of crystalline pure water, undisturbed and calm, which reflected on its bosom the immensity and infinity of the sky overhead; on my right was a small stream, taking its origin from the lake, but turbulent and noisy, struggling its way over its stony bed, conscious of its glory and majesty. On the one hand I could visualize sublimity, solemnity, and grandeur; on the other, ease, grace, flow, elasticity, rhythm, and music; on one hand there was depth, reserve, stillness, on the other comparative shallowness but eloquence and glow of life. The glory and sublimity of the Calm were vividly contrasted with the grandeur and eloquence of the Flow. Being and Becoming were seen in a striking contrast with each other; the one was not different from the other, yet it was not the same.

Becoming has endless variety in it, yet it has a close affinity with the unchanging Oneness. If the previous illustration be stretched a little further, without committing ourselves to the appositeness of petty details, we may say that the stream, after a brief career of beauty, grace, and rhythm, enters into the plains and branches off into various canals and their offshoots for the purposes of irrigation. Beauty and grace change into peace and utility. The process of hardening and flattening out gradually gets completed. The charm and magic of the flow are replaced by monotony. The stagnant water is as dumb as the close air is oppressive or vacancy or

vagueness of consciousness (split consciousness) is most intolerable for human creatures. It is here that we get involved into the labyrinthine mazes of the petty streams which are quite oblivious of the origin and rhythm of the mighty stream that gave them birth and being. Life, in the same way, may be split up into three clear-cut stages, those of Being, Becoming, and Solidity. Being is harmony, Becoming is rhythm and Solidity is utility. It is the same life-stream with three obviously distinct features: they are miles apart from one another, yet they insensibly run into one another. They are apparently separate entities. Yet they have the spirit of openness behind them.

Life in its pure and primitive form is Pure Consciousness. This statement may appear to be disputable and some psychologists may go to the length of contending that pure consciousness is a mere figment of the imagination. They call it an intellectual abstraction to which nothing corresponds in actual reality. Yet it is not a fantastic concept created out of 'airy nothing' by an intellectual feat. Those who base their study of consciousness on the analysis of its states other than the waking state, cling firmly to the view that pure consciousness is a matter of actual experience. The force of their argument derives its validity from the fact that there is evidently no justification for limiting our experience to the Waking State alone. The Dream State and Sound Sleep are also experiences that are equally true and valid. An intelligent analysis of these states reveals the incontrovertible fact that pure consciousness can and does exist in spite of and besides a consciousness which has within it a subject-object relation. Now, if Being is pure consciousness, Becoming is self-consciousness or consciousness turned upon itself. It becomes at once the seer and the seen, the observer and the observed. The integrity of experience gives way to a certain rhythm and elasticity which feel their own grace and beauty. By a little extension of this process consciousness soon comes to be outwardly directed; it begins to illumine objects other

than itself. It makes the knowledge of individuals or particulars possible. It plays upon and round the material objects and makes it possible for conscious beings to know them or know about them. Pure consciousness degenerates into self-consciousness which in its turn gives place to ordinary consciousness in which the subject stands related to the object as the seer to the seen, different and apart from it.

Life, in its onward march, is thus at once a gainer and a loser. If it loses its integrity, identity or simplicity, it gains in richness, wealth and variety. In simplicity the approach is direct and immediate; in diversity it is indirect and mediate. Identity is apprehended face to face, but variety reveals to view an inexhaustible store-house of wealth which may bewilder some, yet it unravels mysteries which would otherwise remain hidden and concealed as they lie too deep for an unanalytical mind. Evolution is an interplay of the forces of identity and diversity. Both, as warp and woof, weave between themselves a universe rich in its abundant wealth and at the same time preserving its pristine glory of oneness and sameness. Sometimes the one aspect and sometimes the other catches our fancy, and it is only rarely that a man, gifted with an unusual capacity of observation and insight, can see the presence of both elements simultaneously or even go beyond and apprehend a unity in diversity or unity through diversity or unity alone despite diversity. The same life-force, *vita spiritus* reveals itself in its (a) identity, (b) identity through variety and (c) variety.

Pure consciousness is perfect identity in which differentiation of any sort does not obtain. It is unrelated and has no external or internal references. It does not however mean, as some may be thoughtlessly inclined to infer from these premises, that it is contentless or that it is barren and empty. It is a state of balance or equanimity or poise of a peculiar type in which everything is at rest and in such perfect accord with all the rest that no motion is visible, no difference is perceptible and no discord is imaginable.

There is perfect harmony, a harmony not between component parts, but a complete concord where difference or opposition does not exist. The whole is one, indivisible and perfect. In the face of such a complete identity the idea of a synthetic unity does not haunt the mind. It is a richness made all the richer by the absence or inhibition of the sharp edges of individualizing factors. Everything runs into, merges into, everything else, overlays everything else, so that no individual element retains its separate identity having discovered its identity with the one reality. It is consciousness playing with itself. Consciousness, in this form, I would prefer to call *Reason*. Reason is universal consciousness, unhampered by individualising tendencies or the limiting qualities of the senses.

Becoming is self-consciousness, a state in which consciousness differentiates within itself between that which illumines and that which is illuminated; it gives birth to an opposition within itself. Life begins to *feel* itself by the resistance offered to it by its opposite, i.e. non-life. Consciousness is opposed by matter, motion by inertia. Life at once becomes dynamic and mobile. It no longer moves within itself, which apparently means no movement at all; it stirs and like waves strikes against the opposition which is nothing other than its own walls. The first opposition it meets with simply gives tone to and heightens the effect of its own elasticity and rhythm. All energy, vitality or vigour that was held up in a tense form is released and begins to flow with a certain grace creating an impression of concord and harmony. The stream carves out its own course and form, and except for this limitation, it dances along with a free and rhythmic flow. Life or consciousness in this form is called *Emotion*. It is life in its dynamic aspect, where its energy becomes manifest with its full force and intensity, yet not destitute of that sweet harmony of parts which composed life in its primitive form. Emotion is Reason in its dynamic form. 'The stream of consciousness is directed by emotional forces which are

assuredly not logical in character. Logic plays a part in directing the minor currents in the stream but the power which drives the stream and determines its main course originates in emotional systems.'

Matter makes cross-sections against the background of life-force by cutting in across the message of perfection, rending and wrecking it into pieces whose only relation among themselves comes to be that of juxtaposition. All reference becomes external, being accidental rather than essential. Opposition becomes still more pronounced and acute. The integrity of *vita spiritus* which is one indivisible whole is reduced to an obvious diversity that knows no end. Spirit knows no divisions: matter creates divisions where there are none. Life-force thus seems to be split up into a variety of ways, and this accounts for all the wealth and richness which abounds in this universe. Nature breeds, encourages and revels in variety. Consciousness has here quite a different function to perform. It has to deal with matter which is hard, stubborn and offers resistance. It tries to penetrate into a realm which is opposed to it in nature and substance. In this effort it almost loses touch with its origin and is completely lost in its new-found love to which it shows steady devotion and sincerity. To understand and illuminate matter becomes the be-all and end-all of its motive, and to deal with it with a view to realizing itself its sole delight. Consciousness no more finds delight in its own self, but seeks it in and through matter. It is deprived of its independence and freedom and universality and is limited to the humbler task of being useful to matter in its evolutionary progress. It has thus to deal with something characterized by rigidity, solidity and fixity; accordingly it loses its own flow and rhythm and becomes more or less stationary and stagnate in character. It is related to fixed things having fixed relations which admit of little or no elasticity. Whatever it finds also gets a fixed form and shape and it becomes hard to mould it into a mobile form. Traditions, conventions and formalities are the shapes

taken by consciousness. In this form consciousness may be called *thought*.

Life works at different levels or in various forms. When it has no external reference and delights in its own self, its delight springs from the harmony of deep joy born of perfect concord, symmetry and order. It is delight that wells up from an awareness of perfection and fullness. A vision that can see into this perfection and entirety and visualizes the harmony of all larger relations is Reason. But life works at a lower level when it seeks expression. It becomes dynamic and its perfection yields place to rhythm and flow. Even at this level life rolls in itself, meeting opposition from its own self. It is this opposition which brings to surface its erstwhile balanced but now released energy. Without this dynamism expressed in life's manifestation, balance would amount to non-existence. That is why to some thinkers life is meaningless and without significance except in expression. Life in this stage is *Emotion*. Emotion is to complete identification with and direct realization of the flow and rhythm of life. In its lowest stage, the normal level, Life works in opposition to Matter. It becomes stagnate and stationary: it is vivisected and disjointed: it no longer flows, it is forced out in spurts. Variety with which it has to deal deprives it of its unity and elasticity. It works in fixed channels with fixed motives. Life in this form is *Thought*. It is consciousness of minor relations and petty details.

Life around us presents a bewildering variety. It overwhelms us with its richness and wealth. Life, in the cause of evolution, continues the process of disintegration and alienation, resulting in the endless multiplication of forms and shapes it assumes to discover itself, to reveal itself and to perpetuate itself in order to perfect itself. Variety or the principle of 'manyness' can flourish or thrive only on the never-ceasing vivisection of the products and by-products of evolution, engendered and created under the law of contradiction. Every object, even at its first appearance, created by the inven-

tive urge of life-force, finds itself confronted with its opposite, without which it can have neither individuality nor being. Contradiction itself is the 'form' of creation; it is the agency through which it works and propagates itself. Through it, life advances on its ever enriching and ever developing path. Creation starts with negation and from thence works on to a higher creation.

No single form, however high, can exhaust or reveal completely and perfectly that life-force from which it derives its sustenance and being. The infinite nature of the primitive life-force, pushes forward, as it recognizes the incompetence or incapacity of a particular form to reveal its true nature in its entirety, to a still better and more highly evolved 'form' that can unravel its mysteries and potentialities still more adequately and comprehensively. This accounts for the infinite modes and forms ranging from the infinitesimally small object, revealed to view only by a microscope, to the most highly evolved organism, namely, the self-conscious soul of a philosopher.

In the complex process of differentiation, a few steps or stages tend to create a gulf of forgetfulness, making the higher evolved organism oblivious of its connection and relation with the less evolved which in the scale of creation is its distant predecessor. The various branches and their offshoots which have a common origin in the beginning, separate themselves to the extent of denying even the bare possibility of a distant or remote relation that exists intact and undisturbed in the background. This process of isolation cuts them off apparently so completely that it requires concentrated effort to go back to the source of unity. Thus gradually there are set up forms and objects which own relation with their nearest and not-distant predecessors or acknowledge kinship with the co-existing objects on and through which their own existence is preserved and secured. Among themselves they find ties and bonds which unite them into a system that seems to function, exist and flourish independently of and separately from other

systems that have grown and developed synchronously.

These ramifications of life are a result of the diffusion of life-force which at points is congealed and solidified. Nature, as it meets the eye, is petrified energy, surrounded and played upon by diffused energy. Polarized energy breaks itself into fragments with clear-cut, well-defined and sharp boundaries and thus arrests the continuity of life and cuts off, apparently, all relations that naturally exist between the individualized units. The fine vibrations which characterise the continuity and elasticity of life are replaced by wooden and inelastic urges that are hopelessly limited to and confined within the static fragments. The original concentrated or harmonized force (reason) flows out into fine rhythmical vibrations (emotions) which eventually undergo the process of petrification (thought). Thought is not however all too wooden as not to look back to its true nature, or fly back to its own source. When employed by its nearest surroundings or in the service of the environment which is both fragmentary and static, it has a practical purpose to fulfil; when it yearns after a union with the universal and dynamic urges from which it has been cut off, it tries to transcend its limits and have a peep into the truer values and higher planes of life. This is real thought.

Thought is always forward-looking in spite of the fact that solidity is its home and care. This tendency makes it merge itself into something higher till it loses its identity when swallowed up by Reason which gave it birth. Thought is thus identical with existence (empirical reality) and not with Being (transcendental reality). It can understand, guide, and control this realm of diversity with a certainty and confidence all its own. Yet it cannot keep its unity intact when confronted with the antagonizing units, individuals, or systems, their needs and their requirements. The strain on thought, however, proves too much and it almost seems to break under its weight and so seeks relief and that not without success. It looks before

and after and pines for what is not. Thought finds itself restless in the midst of all confusion and chaos caused by the perplexing intricacies into which the world of diversity is gradually evolved. Its capacity for solving the problems thus created is infinite; at times it rejoices and luxuriates in seeking their solutions. Contradictions however multiply and thought stands staggered before this avalanche of ever rising new situations. It is perplexed even by its own stupendous powers that stupefy more than help. This despair finds an utterance in the words of Keats who feels that 'to think is to be full of sorrow.' Its incompleteness and incompetence to reconcile contradictions is too obvious: it lives and feeds on them. It begins to feel the 'burthen of mystery' but knows no way of escape. The only redeeming feature is that thought is forward-pointing and the lure of curiosity drags it on.

Thought is a limiting process. It cries halt to its functioning capacity and says to itself 'thus far and no farther.' But what is this 'farther'? It is that region of finer life of finer vibrations, subtler urges and aesthetic impulses, which constitute the dynamo, the vigour and vitality of life and which electrify existence and make it vibrate with rhythmic and elastic energy. It is life in its flow and flux. It is life-force not yet solidified. It is the essence, content, and material of life. It is life diffused throughout existence. Vigour, passion, and vitality are its characteristics. It is free from restrictions, as it is unhampered by divisions and contradictions. It sees all things in itself and itself in all. Harmony is its law and beauty its form. In it the 'burthen of mystery is lightened,' as all considerations of opposition is obliterated. Unity and continuity replace separation and isolation. But they are felt and divined rather than perceived. The sweetness of 'unheard melodies' and 'ditties of no tone' that enter 'directly into the soul' being 'unobtrusive' is greater than heard melodies. Life is here caught on a loftier plane. It has the freshness of novelty, refreshing charm of strangeness but also grace

of spontaneous familiarity. In this world one is not the slave of transitoriness but the master of eternity.

Consciousness of contradictions, however, is not completely effaced, though quite reconciled. The effect of the emotional system is to throw into the stream of consciousness ideas belonging to the system, to reinforce currents in harmony with it and to inhibit currents which are incompatible or in conflict with the main current. Life is seen in its broader relations but relations are not altogether abolished. Life is granted freedom and fulness as a result of spiritual emancipation from things dead and deadening but the quietness and bliss which come from complete identity or total absorption in life itself are yet unrealized. The final plunge has to be taken into the stream of life-force in a perfectly concentrated or focussed form. Existence is not reduced to a mere illusion but attains a poise and an equilibrium in which everything is, yet nothing is. This is *Reason par excellence*. This is that 'serene and blessed mood' in which our 'corporeal frame' is 'almost suspended' and we 'become a living soul' and 'see into the life of things.'

Reason is the discovery of the fundamentals of Life; Emotion is the direct awareness or realization of Life in motion; Thought is the everyday functioning of life-force. Reason reveals the harmony of Life, Emotion its rhythm and Thought its utility. Thought is Reason in the service of Practical Life; both are static yet one derives its inactivity from its incapacity, the other from its perfection. Emotion stands midway between; it gives us a heightened awareness of life and has an important part to play in the realization and enjoyment of values. Thought by its rigidity and fixity keeps us tied, hand and foot, to the world; Emotion, with its energy and force, imparts to man boundless energy and strength; Reason leads us to a direct knowledge of Life itself. Thought is human, Emotion is half human and half divine, Reason is divine. Prose is the language of thought, Poetry that of Emotion, and mystic philosophy that of Reason.

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

BY D. P. LINGWOOD

Two outstanding events occurred in the course of the last century, which are of permanent importance to the whole race of men. One was the consolidation of the science of Comparative Religion under the auspices of Oriental Learning; and the other was the birth—or, we would prefer to say, the *life*, of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The first of these events took place in the West, the second in the East in India. Neither of them was a sudden flowering from nothing. The seed had been planted long ago, and at last it blossomed. Like the aloe-bud, which comes into bloom with a burst of wondrous and glorious beauty at the end of every century, it arose and filled the earth with its sweetness. Shoots had been produced prematurely before; but had either come immediately to nothing, or had served their age, if it was ready for them, as best they could, and eventually died. In the West the Science or Philosophy of Religion, call it what you will, had progressed but slowly. In every other department of human investigation and enquiry systems of classification had long ago been universally adopted. Ages before, in classical times, Herodotus had classified races by their hair. Aristotle had classified almost everything with which his fertile and inventive mind had come in contact. In the eighteenth century Linnaeus classified plants. Lavater classified human character by observing its external lineaments. On all sides men were strenuously endeavouring to introduce the rudiments of order into the vast and chaotic mass of knowledge which they had inherited from their forefathers, and to which they were constantly adding from their own resources. This introduction they endeavoured to effect by means of principles. Hypotheses were thrown by the handful into the whirlpool of phenomena, and the chaos arranged itself in a pattern, became a

cosmos. By collecting numerous individual things, by patiently observing them and subsuming them under small laws, large laws, universal laws, were established, until it must have seemed that the inductive method was the mystic key with which to unlock the secrets of God. But religion, owing to the peculiar sacredness which even scientific men attached to it, remained untouched in the midst of all their investigation. Men were afraid that if they laid their sacrilegious fingers on it, it would blast them, like the Ark. There was also the influence of the church, which declared that although the sublime truths of the Christian religion,—the less unsearchable ones, at least—might be demonstrated by the force of reason and logic, they never could come under its jurisdiction or be criticized by it. Reason was merely the handmaid of faith, as philosophy of theology. This did not, of course, preclude rationalist assaults upon faiths inimical to Christianity such as the sallies made by St. Thomas Aquinas and similar angelic doctors against the Mohammedans. Indeed, the church enjoined the use of such weapons upon its militant sons. The heathen, being by that very definition insusceptible to the blandishments and persuasions of faith, could be converted by two means only—logic and the sword. The church therefore gave her hearty blessings to both.

But a more potent reason why the Science or Philosophy of Religion did not prevail and flourish at an earlier date was lack of materials on which to base itself. A theory of religion must be founded on the facts of religion. These facts must carefully be collected, studied and summarized; for it is then only that they can become of use to the larger purposes of the philosopher of religion. On the whole knowledge of foreign religions other than Islam was very scanty during the Middle Ages. A little Arabic learning had

penetrated at an early date into the Monasteries of Catholic Europe—more deeply even than the knowledge of Greek, which had to be revived by the Humanists early in the Renaissance period; but it was acquired principally in order to study Arabic translations of Aristotle, who was then in vogue. The only medieval writer, as far as I recollect, to make a scientific study of religions in a broadly critical and yet sympathetic spirit, was Roger Bacon, the anathematized, secluded genius of the cloister who heralded the dawn of a New Age in thought. In the concluding section of his *Opus Majus* a classification of religions is given, headed by Christianity. The rest follow in order of merit. It would appear that Bacon obtained his information concerning the details of the religions he mentions from two Franciscan fathers, missionaries to the East, who were then resident in the south of France, having recently returned from their travels.

With the Reformation those seeds of scepticism, which are always in men's minds, began to shoot up and show themselves. But now they came out openly and in the light of day, not in secrecy and under the shadows of night. Now doubts were flung broadcast in books which could be printed in the thousand, not veiled under allegories and mysterious symbols on a few sheets of vellum which church-kindled fires could destroy for ever in a few minutes. Not only did men begin to say that there were other ways to Heaven than that shown by the church, but that there was no way there at all—that there was no Heaven, no immortal soul, no God. This was perhaps a purely natural and to-be-expected reaction against the religious despotism of the Middle Ages.

At the same time as this expansion of the field of European thought and aspiration a corresponding and equally profound and far-reaching expansion was going on in the field of politics. I refer to the expansion of the tiny island of England, Scotland and Wales into the British Empire. It will invariably be found that the expansion of a supreme

power over a considerable portion of the earth's surface, and over many of her different peoples, always precedes the expansion of eclecticism, and the growth of new forms of thought and feeling, of philosophy, religion, and art. The military conqueror digs the channels which join the rivers of nations, along which they all pour with their vast riches of culture—to mingle, in the end, in the waters of the great ocean. The roads, which Rome built, were built, all unknowingly, for the triumphant feet of Christianity. When the Caesars fell, the Popes assumed their purple and imperial power, and the whole Western world became Christian. And similarly in the East. Under Akbar, under Ashoka, under Kublai Khan, under all the other great conquerors and consolidators of empire, religions spread, religions mingled, religions were unified in the light of that principle for the sake of which they all exist, and which is immanent in the heart of every one of them. All this was of immense benefit to religion. For the essence of religion is to recognise the Divine everywhere in the universe. If you recognise it in every stock and stone, shall you not recognise it in the highest aspirations of your fellow men, even though they are different in expression from your own?

Political contact stimulates cultural fellowship. Indeed, they are only different faces of the same fundamental fact. For all men are brothers, as the Chinese say. Gradually, as translations of Sanskrit books were made, the light of a new knowledge broke upon the West—the knowledge of the spiritual basis of man's existence, which had been obscured for so long. Perhaps the greatest of the early disseminators and popularizers of this new knowledge was Max Muller. He it was who first travelled into the vast and thorny forest of Sanskritic studies and brought back from Vedic trees the veritable plums of immortality. He is also the first juncture of the two main subjects of our present enquiry—the life of Sri Ramakrishna and the consolidation of the science of Comparative Religion. For when all his labours of translation and ex-

position were accomplished he set a crown upon them by undertaking to write the life of the Indian saint from materials supplied by Swami Vivekananda, who visited him at his home in Oxford. It cannot be expected that he should escape entirely unaffected by the subject of his life-long studies. The lofty spirit of the Vedanta spoke to his soul in tones of thunder, and he ended his life upon earth believing that it had not been the first, and that it would not be the last.

But even Max Muller, with all his broad sympathy for the diverse forms of faith and no faith, did not actually *live* each religion with which he came into contact. This is a thing which could not have been done in the West. It is even doubtful if it could have been done in the East prior to the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. If in the West there had been intolerant misunderstanding, in the East there had been tolerant misunderstanding, of all religions other than one's own. In the West it was believed that there was one religion only for everybody; that there was no back-door into the Holy of Holies, but only one magnificent Main Entrance dominated by the church, which scrutinized all who came seeking admission, and separated the goats from the sheep, allowing only the latter to enter. In the East it was believed that there was one religion for every man; and therefore no one tried to follow and understand his brother's way. The Easterner stuck to his own path and allowed others to do the same. But this is now impossible to thinking men. In the East and West a new and mighty spirit is abroad. It blows from those Himalayan heights on which Sri Ramakrishna entered into the bliss of the Absolute and became one with it. It is destined to fructify the whole world. It will bend the hearts of men like a field of green corn. Never before had the idea occurred to anyone that all these religions, all these different avenues of approach to the mansion of the Heavenly Father, might be used by one man in the course of one human life. Certainly none had ever before followed them all and found out by personal experience that they

all led up to the same central fact of existence, namely God. But now this truth was made fully manifest in the life of one who was not only the embodiment of God, but also the exemplar of all the different ways in which men might reach Him. The star of the Paramahansa, the Great Indian Swami, is now engraved in the Heavens to guide all those who wander on the seas of time in search of Truth Eternal. The wanderers may be far asunder, and voyaging on different oceans, and they may never see each other; but *he* sees them all, and knows that they will all ultimately arrive at that Bosom of Light in which he shines enthroned.

In the West is a vast body of the facts of religion. Collected in the English tongue are all the great thoughts that ever have passed through the mind of man. In the East we have a living spirit eager to inhabit these dead forms and give life to them. Let us hope that the day of union is at hand—the day when the general will join with the particular, the inward essence with its outward expression, the knowledge with the experience of religion, man with God.

The Renaissance, said Papini, which would be brought about in Europe as the result of the discovery of Oriental culture would reduce to nothing, by comparison, the Renaissance brought about in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the rediscovery of the cultures of classical Greece and Rome. Perhaps the most important part of this second Renaissance will be the infusion of new religious spirit into the minds of the men and women of the West. We often tell each other that all religions are equally true (we sometimes mean equally false); but who has been able to realize it? Swami Vivekananda has said that most men are really atheists, even the so-called religious. Similarly, we may declare that those who maintain that all religions are gates to Heaven are hypocrites. For none of these people have experienced the truth in which they profess to believe. How many men have ever seen God? Only a very few. Who has been able to go to Him through *all* Gates? Fewer still. But Sri Ramakrishna

went through them all not once only but many times. He said : ' I have practised all religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects. I have found that it is the same God towards Whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths.' A mere intellectual recognition of the unity of religions is not enough ; for it is only founded upon the identification of particulars, not on the experience of the universal which lies behind them all. Few men have even any experience of the unity which lies behind their 'own' religion. Much less still have they any experience of that which lies behind their neighbours. But from his height of supreme realization Sri Ramakrishna could see that all these avenues of approach led up to the place where he sat. And so, when he came down to the relative plane he did not try to push men off one path of religious endeavour into another, but helped them on to the Absolute along that path on which he found them already engaged. This was the secret of his success with his disciples. He had no preconceived plan of training to which they were to conform. He took their soul-stuff as he found it and shaped it according to its own nature ; or rather, he did not shape it at all, but only helped it to grow up to the fulness of the perfection within it.

Sri Ramakrishna was a great apostle of the gospel of the brotherhood of Man. And, like his experience of the unity of religions, it was no mere intellectual hypothesis which he formulated. He felt the pain of others as his own. His nephew saw his back red and inflamed at the sight of a man whose back was scored with the whip. And Girish Chandra Ghosh, whose witness is unimpeachable, has certified to the fact of his stigmata. This spiritual contact with all forms of life made him at one even with animals and plants. It has been said of him that he felt a brutal step upon the earth as it were upon his own heart. This marvellous man possessed the faculty of completely identifying himself with everything in the universe. For he had 'become God,' and what is the universe

in reality but God ? Consequently, when he decided that all religions were one he did not stop there. He once saw a poor Moham-medan. It was obvious to him that the man was enlightened ; and so he followed him. He did not worship his Hindu gods. For a while he forgot even his beloved Kali.

He wore the dress of a Mussalman, and performed all the customary prayers and prostrations. He went to live outside the temple of which he was priest. While engaged in spiritual practice he had a vision of the Prophet of Islam. He lost himself in the Prophet and drew near to the God whom the Prophet worshipped. Then he lost himself in that God and entered into the Absolute. He realized that it was the same Absolute to which he had gone by meditating on his Divine Mother, Kali, and all his Hindu gods. This was the true realization of his unity with his Mohammedan brothers ; not a learned and laborious enquiry into the sources of Islam, weighing the pros and cons of whether it owed more to Judaism or to Christianity, as is the habit of our savants in the West. He had found out the truth for himself. None could contradict him ; for he had seen and known.

Similarly he practised Christianity. For a long time he lived and moved and had his being in the God of popular Christianity, Christ. Night and morning he burned incense before his picture. And finally he enjoyed the vision of Christ, too. They embraced each other and became one. Thence they floated together to the Absolute.

This is a new idea in the history of religion. It could have flowered only from a very intense realization of his own Absolute. To begin with he must have some criterion by which to judge his experiences in the course of his second search for God. In the end he would realize that the test and the thing tested were one and the same. An Absolute identity between religions would be established on the firm basis of a personal experience of them all. ' Wherever I look I see men quarrelling in the name of religion—Hindus, Moham-medans, Brahmos, Vaishnavas, and the rest ;

but they never reflect that he, who is called Krishna is also called Shiva, and bears the name of Primal Energy, Jesus and Allah as well—the same Rama with a thousand names. The tank has several ghats. At one Hindus draw water in pitchers, and call it *Jal*; at another Mussalmans draw water in leathern bottles and call it *Pani*; at a third Christians, and they call it *Water*. Can we imagine that the water is not *Jal*, but only *Pani* or *Water*? How ridiculous! The substance is One under different names and everyone is seeking the same substance; nothing but climate, temperament, and name varies. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him! He will surely realize Him.'

What Sri Ramakrishna was it would be

impossible to say. We cannot calculate beforehand what will be his influence upon the future of East and West, and upon the whole world. But certainly, he is the herald of the dawn of a New Age. Not of one entirely free from evil, for that is impossible in relative existence; but one in which man can at least conquer the evil which is in their own hearts, and light there the torch of the imperishable brightness of Sri Ramakrishna. Then indeed will East and West become united. Then indeed will men be able to look into their brothers' hearts and see the face of their own God shining there. Then indeed will the veils of ignorance be rent one by one and men be on the way to realizing the supreme end of their existence.

THE FLOWER OF THE EARTH

BY TANDRA DEVI

The flower of the earth is trampled in dust
And the seedlings of spring
Are coming up amid heaps of carnage.

Love lies in far fields
Buried with the hearts of women.
Quickly he has perished—
But their anguish shall go on unceasingly.

The sun shines
And showers water gardens,
But for women
Darkness has descended,
And their tears rain down
On neglected garments.

The heel of the tyrant
Has trampled out beauty;
Greed and guile
Have devastated the earth.

Why have we lost our path
In trackless wastes,
Whilst Thou waitest
With veiled face,
Turning away from our crimes?

The saints have not prevailed;
The good and the true
We sacrificed
By acquiescence.
We were dead—
So the tyrant came
To torture our sons—
To take them away.

Why did the Spirit of God
Permit the crawling vipers of power-lust
To sting our children?

Alas! We slept—
We slept!

In vain He waited—
But we slept.

*

Lambs lie along the tank-way—
Children
And poets.

*

Now
Grind them down, down,
As ever—
Thou monster wrought of darkness!

*

Where is divine Nature?
She is far from the paths of man.
Her sanctuary has been violated;
All mankind has sinned.

Steel—
Flames—
The bent body—
The twisted mind!

Whose the blame?
Whose
The folly?

We led our children upon the paths of steel,
And glory is perished
In the furnaces of industry.

We poured
Molten iron
In the mould of the heart!
We worshipped that Image
Set amid the helpless ones.

In counting-houses—
Divine Man is outraged.
Now
In charnel-heaps—
We burn Him with our dead.

*

Shall we remember
The bitter lesson—
Teach it to babes—
Cry it in the day of Peace—
Force it upon our Councils—
Deny new transgressions
In the new days?
O man! Hast thou learned?
And woman—
Art thou at last humbled?

There is no End
But God.

Lords of Industry!
Captains of Finance!
Forge His Way—
Compete
For His Peace.

Little men—
Wolves of the market-place,
Cease from prowling
From snarling, devouring!
Cease!—
Beasts of the wild market-places,
And of the fearful jungles—
Ravaging vultures
Biting upon the breasts of the powerless—

Cease forever,
Or be silenced
By the blood of our children
Which waters the seeds of spring,
Coming up amid the ruins
Of our martyred cities—
The spring of Youth,
Watched by the wondering eyes of age.

*

Shall Youth trample the Beast—
Taking blessings from our withered hands—
Taking the courage of our suffering hearts?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The *Conversations with Swami Shivananda* this month deal with some of the higher levels reached in meditation. . . . In this second part of *Is Vedanta the Future Religion?* Swami Vivekananda advocates the realization of Vedantic ideals in private and social life, instead of keeping them confined to books or to the lecture hall. . . . Sir S. Radhakrishnan needs no introduction to our readers. *An Address on the Bhagavad Gita*, which he delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Karachi, is a model of compressed wisdom expressed in lucid and inspiring words. . . . In *Some Aspects of Shankara's Philosophy* Prof. Banerjee gives an excellent analysis of the central ideas of Shankara's philosophy, and corrects the view propagated by Western Orientalists and repeated by some ignorant Indians that Shankara's Mayavada is mere illusionism. . . . Prof. Sarma has given us another of his brilliantly worded essays in *Limitations of Thought*. Only, readers must keep in mind that he uses the terms under discussion in specially defined senses. 'Reason,' for example, is used in the sense of *G Vernunft* in Kant or of the *Ritambhara Prajna* of Patanjali. This is because the English language lacks the proper word to express the idea. . . . *The Practice of the Presence of God* is an article from one of our youngest contributors, an English youth serving in the military somewhere in the Far East. When in India he became interested in Eastern philosophy and came into contact with some of the centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. The author's wide reading, careful thinking, and a deep and sincere longing for the truth are all reflected in this article. . . . *The Flower of the Earth* is a powerful poem expressing the anguished thoughts of parents and wives upon the chaotic nature of the present-day world scene and their hopes that brighter days will dawn for man on earth. Tandra Devi is a well-

known Irish poetess who has been writing under this pseudonym for a long time. This poem is a witness to the sensitiveness of her soul which records like the seismograph every impulse threatening the safety of Man on earth.

STUDY OF SANSKRIT

There is no gainsaying the fact that in modern India Sanskrit is becoming less and less popular. Our educational institutions give it an unimportant place in their curricula as 'second' or 'classical' language. The ordinary man does not feel any necessity for its use in his day-to-day life except for purposes of religious ceremonies. Yet, to every Hindu, Sanskrit is indispensable. Most of the Hindu scriptures and philosophical works are in that language, and a majority of Indian vernaculars are of Sanskrit origin. But on account of its not being a spoken language of the masses, and due to political and economic factors, Sanskrit has fallen into disuse. We are happy to find that a Sanskrit Association has been established, some months ago, in Karachi, under the presidency of Swami Ranganathananda, head of the local Ramakrishna Ashrama. The laudable efforts of the Association in 'co-ordinating, encouraging, and promoting all activities in connection with the study of Sanskrit and ancient Indian culture,' will, we hope, meet with great success.

In his inaugural address to the Karachi Sanskrit Association, Sir S. Radhakrishnan gave a lucid exposition of the true meaning and purpose of religion. He wanted that the Association should not rest with mere academic study of Sanskrit but 'bring out the true culture embodied in Sanskrit literature—the development of free thought which does not ask for the suppression of any faculty.' He said :

When an Upanishadic seer was asked as to how to proceed with the search for God, the seeker was given the fullest liberty of thought—a step which cannot be thought of even in the so-called civilized world of the

present time. . . . Every individual has absolute liberty to walk in any way he chooses. . . . There are no statutory methods of realization. . . . This is the spirit which moved the oldest interpreters of this great country and this is the spirit that moves men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sri Ramakrishna, and Mahatma Gandhi. They have emphasized this catholicity of outlook.

Hindu ideas of pantheism and polytheism have been the butt of ridicule by followers of other religions. Elucidating the inner significance of these ideas, Sir Radhakrishnan observed :

We may not understand God. But God understands our minds all right. Therefore it does not matter how we approach Him. . . . What is meant is that the same Reality is behind all the forms, whether you worship it as Surya, Ganesha, or Vishnu. Call it by any name, it matters little.

It is not essential to conform to the various characterizations of the Supreme Reality. Sri Ramakrishna realized the one divinity underlying all forms of manifestation and proclaimed the truth that there is no fundamental difference between the goal of one religion and that of another. We have it on the authority of his intuitive perception that different religions are only different ways by which different types of aspirants proceed towards the One Ultimate Truth. Mere scholarship in Sanskrit and observance of rituals or external austerities could not make a man religious in the true sense. Sir Radhakrishnan asked the Sanskrit Association to strive to bring about a proper understanding of the spirit of religion. Religion was realization ;

it was not the acceptance of a particular belief, it was not the observance of a particular ceremonial, it was not the subscription to a formula but the transformation of your own inner life. . . . Religion is a conquest over self. It is not conquest over material world so much. . . . It is a mandate to transform your own nature. You must become different if you are a spiritual soul. You must grow into a larger consciousness, into a higher understanding.

In short he is truly religious who *lives* in God, and not he who merely believes in God.

Another point stressed by the distinguished speaker was that religion should not be a matter of blind belief. An intelligent study of Sanskrit literature should help to develop capacity for independent thinking and keen discernment.

We have not to take blindly anything because this or that person has told but on our own convictions. . . . There are many who come forward, at the present

time, and tell us to obey and ask no questions. Such an attitude has no kind of support so far as the great spiritual tradition in this country is concerned. It has always asked the individual to examine and see for himself or herself.

Even the words of the scriptures are to be scrutinized and accepted on personal conviction. In the words of Sir Radhakrishnan, scholarship in Sanskrit does not consist in mutilating texts or misinterpreting their import.

We have to-day to interpret the scriptures according to our own independent judgment. But we must see that we have the necessary maturity of mind, power of reflection, and capacity to bring them to bear on the problems of life.

In conclusion, Sir Radhakrishnan exhorted the organizers of the Karachi Sanskrit Association to 'bring out the true culture embodied in Sanskrit literature.' Swami Vivekananda wanted that Sanskrit should be made as simple and popular as possible in order that the 'gems of spirituality and culture' stored up in our Shrutis and Smritis may become available to the masses. In addition to the vernaculars, spread of Sanskrit education is also needed. Knowledge of Sanskrit will make culture more wide-spread and give 'a prestige and a power and a strength to the race.' It is culture that raises the lower castes and removes their superstition and fanaticism. The establishment of similar associations, in other parts of the country, will serve to afford greater opportunities for Sanskrit study and research.

DHAN GOPAL MUKERJI TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

We give below extracts from a remarkable letter addressed to Mon. Romain Rolland, the celebrated French savant, by the late Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji. It reveals the latter's high appreciation of Romain Rolland's biographies of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and his deep regard for Rolland's spiritual ideals.

New York,
10 Nov. 1931

Dear Master,

At last I have read your *Ramakrishna* and *Vivekananda*, both in French and English. In the English translation I have studied the notes with care. Now I can say without any modification that this book equals your *Beethoven* and *Jean Christophe*. This is not a

book but the epic poem of the holiness of our time. You have traced the holiness of all mankind under every sentence. The Ramakrishna that emerges from your pages is not a Hindu saint only, also the agony of our modern soul for godhead. The pain of man-God for God-man nowhere do I find so poignantly stated in the literature of the world since Tolstoi penned his confessions! Now I feel I have earned my passport to Paradise because I introduced you to Ramakrishna. I had no idea that I was bringing Prometheus to the hidden source of the Flame Eternal. Of course, the book goes beyond the limits of India and embraces . . . all humanity. That is what an epic of holiness should do. Your Ramakrishna is as simple and fierce as the one they, his apostles, knew. I wish Vivekananda was alive to gaze upon the portrait that you have drawn of the Master. He alone could give you the praise that you deserve . . . If your Ramakrishna is the eternal India, your Vivekananda is the precipitation of that Eternal in our history. Ramakrishna *is*, Vivekananda *moves*. What a magical composition of holiness you have wrought in two keys! I have no criticisms to offer you . . . When I read your *Michael Angelo* or your *Ramakrishna*, the thing that carries me away is your fury of movement completely controlled by your design . . . Here, in America, people are so unhappy about finance that they care not a jot for India's political future nor for Gandhi's moral grandeur . . . In this mental anguish I read your *Ramakrishna* whose trumpet tones have filled me with moral optimism and spiritual joy. This earth is indeed holy now that you, Shivananda, and Gandhi are still on it. I feel like saying 'L'humanité, en avant!'

With my love and most sincere appreciation,

I remain,
Dear Master,
Your obedient servant,
Dhan Gopal Mukerji

The contents of the letter are proof of the noble qualities of head and heart that characterized the two kindred souls who are no more with us. Romain Rolland needs no introduction to lovers of world literature. Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, who had spent a greater part of his eventful life in the United States, was known for his art of book-writing. Though little is known of his writings in this country, his book *The Face of Silence* has aroused much popular interest in Europe. Mrs. Krishna Hutheesing makes mention of her meeting with Mr. Mukerji in her autobiographical narrative *With No Regrets*. She tells us of Mr. Mukerji's simplicity and amiability in an appreciating manner, and

discloses the fact that he had asked her to 'sit and meditate' daily. Paying a generous tribute to his memory, she writes: ' . . . he was the most lovable and delightful person I ever met. . . . We lost a most faithful friend and India one of her brilliant but unknown sons.'

SCIENCE NOTES

It does not explain anything when we say that such and such event happened by chance; it simply means that it happened as it did and we do not know how and why it happened. It shows our utter ignorance of the sequence of events which culminated in the one under reference, and sometimes it exposes our fears and prejudices which stand in our way of acknowledging some links in the chain, simply because it goes against our grain and our accepted notions and premises so to acknowledge them. Science does not recognize any power or authority beyond the material, which she cannot produce in her laboratory, and visible effects of which she cannot tabulate and classify. This universe is a conundrum to her, she has traced its origin to the remotest past and has come to the conclusion that all the planets and satellites, and perhaps all the stars also, have emanated from the sun, which is a blazing mass of rock in gaseous or liquid state, revolving on its axis with a tremendous speed. Planets which revolve round the sun broke from it in the remotest past, because of the centrifugal force acquired by them, and this initial force gave them the motion which they maintain to this day. But who will tell us why this force was just enough to keep this earth, for example, in its position and at a distance from the sun where alone life is possible? And why again the earth itself began to spin round its axis giving it these nights and days which are so essential to life? And the most wonderful part of it is the tilt of the axis to its orbit which gives us this scheme of changing seasons, and of shortening and lengthening of days and nights: What a perfect design and inexplicable execution of planning all this is, and yet can it be

brushed aside as a product of chance? No. The only conclusion which is forced on us is that we did not just stumble into life; some indefinable Power has placed us where we are and has provided for us all the conditions which are essential for our existence. Some of these conditions are beyond human comprehension and only point to the divine nature of that Power.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

The unweari'd sun, from day to day,
Does his creator's power display;
And publishes to every land,
The work of an almighty hand.

* * *

In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine.

I make no apology for this long quotation, for here the poet puts in a nutshell all the laboured argument of a theist, who is at a discount in the present age. But how else can we explain this paraphernalia of shining orbs, moving with a precision which stuns our intellect and petrifies our pride. We feel so small, so utterly insignificant, that we actually shrink from prying into the mystery of creation, for do we not fumble from one line of search into another avenue of approach, and adumbrate one theory with a fanfare of

solemn proclamation, only to discard it within a puny period of a few years? Where is today our conservation of matter, mass, and energy, when matter is now convertible into energy, and energy is supposed to have a mass? Similarly, material propagation of light, or the corpuscular theory, was once discarded, and then re-instated, only to be abandoned finally in favour of the wave theory, within the last thirty years. We change our ground every ten years, but scientists deserve all the credit for this apostasy, for they have never made a fetish of a theory, and have always followed their reason where it has led them. The most cherished ideas and conclusions they have renounced with the resignation of a Yogi, when they discovered facts which belied those ideas and conclusions, which had taken them many years to build after elaborate experiments.

Because science has so far failed to grasp the reality, of which defect they are painfully conscious, if only for the transitoriness of their findings, scientists like Sir James Jeans admit that 'the outstanding achievement of the twentieth century physics is not the theory of relativity with its welding together of space and time, or the theory of quanta, with its present apparent negation of the laws of causation, or the dissection of the atom with the resultant discovery that things are not what they seem; it is the general recognition that we are not yet in contact with the ultimate reality.' Present-day scientists are not, therefore, dogmatic—they cannot afford to be so—and it augurs well for the search to be conducted on right lines.

Know that tranquillity is not to be found by the effortlessness of dull asslike men; it is the lawful energy of man which is said to secure his welfare in both worlds. And that one should make his way out of the pit of this world by force of his energy and diligence, just as the lion breaks out from his cage. One must ponder in himself everyday that his body is subject to corruption, his beastly acts must be kept backward and manlike acts put forward. It is our good exertions that are attended by good results as the bad ones are followed by bad consequences. Chance is a mere meaningless word.

—Yogavasishtha

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

INDIAN HORIZONS. By H. D. SETHNA. Published by Padma Publications, Ltd., Lakshmi Building, Sir P. Mehta Road, Bombay. Pp. 64.

To understand a country it is necessary to know something about its permanent background and its spirit. This booklet gives a picture of renaissance movements unfolding the 'horizons' in every walk of Indian national life. Though the essays contained in this booklet are a collection of journalistic contributions, they represent a connected whole, since the aim of the author is to discover the soul of India, i.e., the spirit of religious idealism which moulds our ideas and ideals. It was reserved for India to proclaim to the world renunciation and spirituality which have inspired the hearts of her children from time immemorial. The observation of the author that every patriot who endeavours to develop the country's consciousness out of its deepest roots has to reckon with this distinguishing characteristic is only too true.

The author has written one essay on Sri Ramakrishna and another on Swami Vivekananda, the twin personalities of Indian renaissance. Reality, according to Sri Ramakrishna, is a principle known by various names as Vishnu, Shiva, Buddha, Christ, etc. It is both personal and impersonal, with attributes and without attributes. Though Reality, from the absolute standpoint, transcends every vestige of relation, it is not severed from the world of mortals; It is, in this aspect, not only the substratum of the universe but also the Father-Mother Divinity. The author has done well in pointing out that the apparent conflict between Ramanuja and Shankara, which was due to two extreme interpretations of the Upanishadic doctrine, has found reconciliation in Sri Ramakrishna. In this connection it would have been quite appropriate if the author, who

is himself a professor of philosophy, had taken the trouble of showing the common points between Shankara and Ramanuja, and how the philosophy of the one embraces the truth of the other.

The author's presentation of Swami Vivekananda as pre-eminently a man of action is one-sided. Similarly the view that the *important* aspect of the Swami's interpretation of Vedanta is the philosophy of action seems to be vague. Swami Vivekananda was as much a Yogi, Jnani, and Bhakta as he was a man of action. It was his infinite love for the downtrodden masses of the country that made prominent his dynamic aspect. If the Swami, in his lectures from Colombo to Almora, had urged the masses to wake up from stupor and indolence and work for the country's progress, it is because he knew that 'hungry stomachs' could not be satiated either by the transcendental beauty of contemplation or by the ethereal bliss of divine communion.

The author's interpretation of 'Satyagraha' and 'patriotism' merits special attention. Ordinarily patriots conceive Satyagraha in terms of suffering and sacrifice. True Satyagraha must not end in frustration or futile effort. It implies both political and spiritual independence. It should, therefore, transform the individual and lift him out of his narrow individuality. In the language of the author, 'the individual must open his soul to the "universal man," the larger consciousness of humanity, like a flower its petals to the sun.' We wish the author had emphasized the concept of love in the evolution of 'new humanity.' For perfect love knows no privileges. It creates a limitless uncalculating self-denial which transfigures character. The language is lucid and the get-up is good. There are some errors in the transliteration of Sanskrit words which may be corrected at the earliest possible opportunity.

S. A.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SWAMI AMRITESWARANANDA

The passing away of Swami Amriteswarananda at the comparatively early age of 53 years was as sudden as it was painful to all who knew him. It was an irreparable loss to the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. To quote the General Secretary, 'His untimely demise deprives us of a very able administrator with unflinching devotion to the cause, whose place can scarcely be filled.'

He left home at the end of 1914 and took orders in 1921. He was a disciple of Sreemat Swami Brahmanandaji. Owing to his great ability he was made a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and a Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in

1922, at an unusually early age. In 1936, he was appointed one of the Assistant Secretaries of these organizations, which post he held till the end. From his younger days he was variously engaged in the activities of the Math and Mission. He energetically participated in such works as the Ganges Flood Relief in Dehradun and Saharan Districts in 1924 and the Behar Earthquake Relief in 1934. He was at different periods Head of the branches at Kishenpur and Madras. Besides, he was often engaged in important works in connection with such branches as the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, the Udbodhan Office, the Bangalore Ashrama, the Rajkot Ashrama, which owe him much for their present welfare and stability. These and various other strenuous duties kept him constantly

busy In fact, he died in harness; for, though he had been suffering from gout for a long time and had heart troubles in consequence, he never avoided the call of duty. Thus when the need arose for him to proceed to Bombay at the end of last year, he responded with alacrity and cancelled his proposed trip to Lahore for which he had purchased a ticket. In spite of his bad health he kept himself busy at Bombay for three months and then proceeded to Lahore via Karachi for some well-earned rest. On the way he visited the Sukkur Barrage and the ancient sites at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa and thus fulfilled some long-cherished desires. But in this the Swami, perhaps, overstrained his damaged heart. And although the doctors at Lahore assured him that there was no immediate danger, the Brahmachari on attendance was suddenly taken aback when at 8-45 p.m. on the 26th March the Swami's heart failed, and he rolled back on his bed while taking his scanty sick diet. He expired in a few minutes before medical help arrived. 'The whole thing took only two or three minutes. He entered into a well-earned sleep with a smiling face and without any pain or struggle.'

The Swami believed more in silent devotion to duty than in public encomium, and sat steadfastly at the helm rather than run after cheap name and fame. As a consequence he was intimately known only to a very limited circle of devotees of Sri Ramakrishna. The public knew only the Mission, but not one of its outstanding moving personalities. And yet whenever he contacted any one his cultured mind left a deep impression on him. Thus the Dewan of the Palitana State, who once met him there, said to a senior monk of the Order that the Ramakrishna movement should be represented in Western India through men of his calibre.

To the monks of the Order the Swami was a friend, guide and philosopher, and his brotherly love knew no limitation of age or intellect. He could accommodate himself to all psychological temperaments. Thus he would be found talking with some one or other for hours together while strolling by the Ganges side, or he would be sympathetically listening to the worries and troubles of younger monks, the foolish plans and stories of enthusiasts, and the irresponsible criticism and condemnation of self-important people. He seldom lost his composure, and, if need be, the most trifling thing could claim his first attention. He was noted for his knowledge and comprehensive view of all the needs and problems of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and he had well-defined plans for future development. But he was always open to conviction, though oftener it was the case that he marshalled facts and figures in such a way that his critics were soon silenced. Besides the problems of the Math and the Mission, he could talk almost on any subject; for during leisure, which he had not much, he read widely. With him he had a set

of books on Vedanta on which subject he sometimes threw wonderful light. He had a love for cattle; and wherever he happened to be he took an intelligent and well-informed interest in the efficient running of the local dairy. With him was a box of homeopathic medicines which he used liberally and intelligently whenever his help was sought. Despite his gout he had a strong body which could bear strain. Mentally and physically he was a strict ascetic who despised show, flippancy and self-enjoyment. His outstanding personality has left its mark on the organizations he served so single-mindedly. His recent infirmities were pressing on his mind. He has been relieved from these; the loss is ours. May his soul rest in peace!

DELHI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

An appeal has been issued to the public on behalf of the Delhi Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission by Lala Shankar Lal, President, Sir Dhiren Mitra, Secretary, and members of the R.K.M. Development Committee for funds. The work carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission at Delhi is divided into two parts, one at the Mission Ashrama and the other at the Free Tuberculosis Clinic located at a rented house in Daryaganj. To keep pace with the fast increasing demands of the public, it is felt that both these branches should have speedy expansion, and for that purpose, a Development Scheme estimated to cost Rs. 5,00,000 has been drawn up.

For the Tuberculosis Clinic, Government has allotted a plot of land in the Western Extension Area and the work of constructing a building on it has already been started. This is expected to cost Rs. 1,48,000 distributed between a Clinic Building, Observation Wards and Laboratory, Staff Quarters, and Electric and Sanitary Fittings. A permanent Fund of Rs. 1,00,000 for the running costs of the Clinic will also be needed bringing the total under this head to about Rs. 2,50,000.

The R. K. Mission Ashrama is, on the other hand, the Spiritual Home of the Delhi Centre, but the amenities at present available at the Ashrama are far too inadequate to meet the increasing interest of the public in it. It is, therefore, proposed that additional buildings should be erected in the Ashrama compound, the cost of these additions being estimated to be Rs. 1,50,000 distributed between a Shrine, a Lecture Hall, a Library, and a Dispensary. A permanent Fund of Rs. 1,00,000 is also to be created for maintenance purpose.

The service which the Ramakrishna Mission has been rendering to humanity, irrespective of caste, colour, or creed, for the last fifty years, is far too well known to require reiteration, and the Development Committee hope that public response to this appeal will be liberal. Contributions will be gratefully received by the President of the Development Committee, "Shankar Niwas," 20, Curzon Road, New Delhi, the Secretary, 5, Queensway, New Delhi, and Swami Gangeshananda, Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi.